

**THE WANDERER.**

**A Dramatic Phantasy**

**In Three Acts**

**By**

**Hannah Levinsohn.**

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NOV. 6, 1933

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**306 Haven Ave.**

**New York.N.Y.**

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A DREAMER.

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JOHN L. LEVINSKY.

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**Characters:**

The WANDERER.

OFFICER.

TESSIE. A Maid.

MARY.

LEONARD.

BOY. Twelve years old.

BOY. Ten " "

JOE CASE.

AMY.

Act I.

Scene I.

Scene: A nook near tavern in Central Park.

Time: The present. A late afternoon in May.

As curtain rises, a nurse, the flapper type, is seated on a bench filing her finger nails. After a moment or so she calls:

Maid Muriel? Muriel, where are you?

Child (From a little distance) I'm here, Tessie, right by the steps.

Maid (Calls) Don't go away. We got to go back soon.

Child (Calls back) I won't go away.

(Maid continues filing her nails. -----Man, about forty, dressed rather shabbily, walks to bench, throws down pack he is carrying, places his heavy cane near pack resting against bench, then sits down, heaving a deep tired sigh.----Maid, attracted by sigh, looks up, sees the man, then continues with her nail file.)

Officer (From a little distance) Hey there! What do you think this is? Your own back yard? You can't pick them flowers. Get down there, or I'll run 'em all in.

(Foot steps are heard. Officer appears. Maid looks up.)

Officer Hello, Tessie. When did you get back?

Maid Day before yesterday.

Officer How was that? You said you was goin' around the world with them. Sure they couldn't do that in--Say, it ain't more'n three weeks since----

Maid Yep. Just about. They had a scrap.

Officer The mister and the misses?

Maid Yep. They've been scrappin' a lot lately; but this one, oh, boy

what a scrap!

Officer And once you told me they was like two peas in a pod.

Maid They was---when they was livin' from hand to mouth. Everything was hunky-dory then. you see, she didn't go steppin' out then like she does now. She didn't have the swell clothes, and she didn't meet those swell Archibalds.

Officer Oh! It's that, is it? Well, it's too bad. I like Mr Martin. He's a fine man. Oughten' get a deal like that.

Maid No, he oughten'. And the worst of it is, he's crazy about her. Half the time he makes believe he don't know what she is doing, for ~~for~~ he'll lose her.

(Day is fading into twilight.)

Officer So she is going as far as that, is she?

Maid I think she is plannin' to beat it with a feller ain't worth her husbands shoe strings; but take it from me, if she goes, she'll come back all right, and he'll be just fool enough to take her back.

Officer It wouldn't be me! If a woman left me for another feller, well, if she came back crawling on her hands and knees I wouldn't take her back.

Wanderer (As he rises and walks over to officer) I wouldn't be so cock sure of that, if I were you.

Officer (Sizing up his man) No? What do you know about it?

Wanderer Everything.

Officer (Sarcastically) From experience, eh?

(A pause.----Wanderer looks at officer as if undecided what to say,---then)

Wanderer I wouldn't bother about a man's make-up if I were you. You

know you some times find drespy covers on no-good books.  
 (A deep sigh) Yes, officer, I talk from experience, and  
 take it from me, it's a great teacher.----(Maid, becoming  
 interested, looks up at Wanderer)----I was once a young fellow  
 like you, stood as straight as you, perhaps even a little more  
 so.---That was the time my wife left me.----

Officer Oh, I see! Your wife left you. That's why-----

Wanderer Yes. That's why I (He looks down at his worn clothes) You  
 see, well, I guess you'll call me a hobo, but I'm just wan-  
 dering about, searching and hoping----

Officer To find your wife?

Wanderer Yes.

Officer (Turns to maid) Say, that's what you call love, eh?

Maid I'll say. It's the kind you see in the pictures.

Child (From distance) Now you stop that.---(Calls)--Tessie, Tessie! H  
 He's got my hat and he won't give it back to me.---(Shouts)--  
 Give me my hat! Tessie, Tessie.

(Maid grabs bag from bench, rushes a few steps, then turns  
 suddenly to officer)

Maid On <sup>duty</sup> ~~my~~ to-morrow?

Officer Sure. Come over.

Child (Screams again) Tessie! Tessie!

Maid That damned kid!---(She runs, bumps into a boy about ten)----  
 Say! Why don't you look where you're goin?

Boy (The East Side type) Why don't you go where you're lookin?

Maid Aw, get out o' my way.---(She rushes past boy and out)

Older boy (About twelve) Guess she had a scrap with her sweetie.

(Officer and Wanderer exchange glances and smile)

Wanderer (Softly) Young America.

(Boys sit down on bench)

Officer Young hood-lums.

(Boys take pennies from pockets. They begin to count, while  
 Officer and Wanderer are watching them.)

Boys One, two, three, four, five.

Older Boy One of us kin ride home. We'll toss an' see which one, ey, kid?

Boy #2 Sure. We'll make it tails wins.---(They toss)---I win. Tails  
 lucky for me all right.

Older Boy I'm glad you got it. I'm bigger'n you. I kin walk bedder an'  
 faster.

(Officer goes over and pats Boy on shoulder)

Officer Yer all right, kid.---(He takes a nickel from pocket and hands  
 it to the Boy)---Here!

Boy (Taking the coin) Thank you.

Officer Now you better beat it. I'ts getting dark.----(Both boys rise  
 to go)-----Where do you kids live?

Boy Down Rivington Street.

Officer Do you know what car to take?

Boy Sure. We take the elevated. It stops right by our corner.

Officer All right. Now, run, your mothers will be lookin' fer you.

(Boys take a few steps toward Exit)--Wait a minute! Are you sure  
 you got five coppers? You know, four won't do. You better count  
 'em again.

(Boy thrusts hand in pocket and pulls out money. As he opens  
 hand, Officer sees a dime among the pennies. Boy is about to  
 close his hand.)

Officer Where did you get that dime?



(Boy hesitates a moment, looks at Officer, smiles mischievously; then both boys turn and run.)

Boy #2 (Shouts) The other cop was'nt a piker like you.

Officer (To Wanderer) Kin yer bent that?

Wanderer (Laughing heartily) I did'nt think a policeman could be fooled so easily.

Officer (As he walks away) Well, kids'll be kids. I guess I'd a done the same thing myself When I was a kid, if I had the sense.-- (He turns facing Wanderer again)---Yer better keep an eye on yer pack an' yer cane there. You never kin tell.

Wanderer You're right, officer. You never can.

(He walks over to bench, takes the pack and cane, goes to a corner bench, where he can scarcely be seen. He takes some food from pocket and begins to eat.--It is quite dark now.

-----Man and woman appear. Man about thirty, the Office-man type, woman about twenty five, rather good-looking, dressed to suggest a would-be New York girl-yet not too flashy.

Leonard Let's sit down.

Mary I'm not a bit tired. I'd rather walk on.

Leonard I hurt my ankle, when I stumbled over there.

Mary I thought you said it did'nt hurt?

Leonard It did'nt then, but it does now, all right. You know, walking does'nt help a sprain any.

Mary No. I suppose not.

( She sits down, Leonard sits close beside her.

Mary Where-about are we?

Leonard You mean what part of the park?

Mary I mean, about what street would this be?

Leonard I really did'nt notice; but I should judge we're about somewhere in the nineties. Why do you ask?

Mary Oh, I don't know. We're not very far from the hotel, are we?

Leonard We're not very near it.--You look tired. Do you want to go back? We'll take a taxi.

Mary (Quickly)---No, no-- I--

Leonard What's the matter, Mary? You're not the same since last night.

Mary Ain't I?

Leonard No.--What's the matter, don't you feel well?

Mary (Looks at him a moment, then lowers her eyes)--I hate ter tell you this, but, --well, I gotta get it over with, so here goes. (Hesitates)-- Len, I--I want to go back home.

Leonard (In shocked tone) What! After all I--Say, was it yesterday? Yes only yesterday morning you told me how happy you are now, that you're awf from that farm and that stupid looking husband of yours. And now---

Mary Yes. I said that, and it's true too, but---Len, you know he was awful good to me. He never in the five years I am married to him said no to my yes. And he's so honest and decent. You know I always told you I can't help liking him a little bit fer that.--Guess it's because I ain't decent myself.

Leonard Why did'nt you think of that before?

Mary I should er--but you know--I told yer, all my life I was cravin' to get to New York and see things and learn things--

Leonard And have a good time.

Mary Yes. I had a good time.

Leonard You bet you did, on my money.--And now, when you----

Mary Don't be saying things to hurt me. Not that it isn't coming to

me. I know it is.--Honest, Len, I appreciate all you did for me. I know you spent a lot o' money on me. I'd like to stay here the rest of my life with you. --I like the smell o' gasoline better than the Jasmine and the Honey Suckle back home.

Leonard Then that settles it. Yo u're staying here!

Mary No. I'm not. My conscience won't let me.--He's been awful good to me.

Leonard Was'nt I good to you?

Mary Yes; but I know I'm not the first woman you ever loved, and I won't be the last. But with Joe it <sup>is</sup> different. You see, he's decent, right through.

Leonard Well, I like that!

Mary You know what I mean. I'm not any more decent than you; but Joe, he's the kind that says "dirt was meant fer pigs".

Leonard Well, if he's so clean, how do you expect him to take you back?

Mary I--I don't know. I might tell him--maybe I'll---

Leonard Maybe nothing. You're staying here with me. You're crazy, if you think you can go back to that farm and even try to be happy for more than two weeks after seeing New York the way you did.

Mary Well, I don't suppose I---

Leonard You don't suppose? Let me tell you something. You'd never stay there, even if he took you back. In less than no time you'd be fit for the bug-house. You were never meant for a farm.

Mary I know that, but Fate put me there, so----

Leonard Oh, Fate be damned! You don't have to live on a farm with a man you don't love, just because Fate put you there.---All you have to do is, leave your fate with the farm, and live here the way you like to live.

Mary Everything you say, Len, sounds all right, but--- it's no use. I'm going back--not just because of my conscience alone, --but- I can't just exactly explain it.

Leonard Can't you? Well, I cap. You're afraid I might get tired of you.

Mary No--no--it is'nt that.

Leonard Yes, it is! I was fool enough to tell I quit <sup>SUE</sup> ~~Sue~~ Brackett ~~man~~ because I got tired of her. But who could help getting tired of her? She was a pest, honest, she was.--I'll never get tired of you, Mary, not even when you're old and gray.

Mary You'll forget d l about me long before I'm old and gray.--  
(She rises)--I'm going home!

Leonard Let's sit here a while yet. It's so damned stuffy in that hotel room.

Mary I'm not going back to the hotel.

Leonard You're not going back? You don't mean to tell me you're going to start for home to-night?

Mary Why not? I can take the nine twenty. It gets <sup>now</sup> around five. It's daylight at five. Come on. Be a good sport and help me out. I <sup>at</sup> got some money but not enough. Lend me five dollars, will you? I'll send it back to you.

Leonard You will, will you? How about the rest of the money I spent on you?

Mary You're not a cheap skate; you're just saying this because---  
( She shakes her head ) It's no use, Len. I'm going back, and

you gotta lend me five dollars. You gotta! I'll send it back to you. You can take my word for it. I will!

Leonard Well, you won't have to trouble sending it back, because I'm not giving it.

Mary If you think that's gonna keep me from going home you got another think coming. I'm sitting right here on this bench till morning; then I'll go and hook my ring.

Leonard All right. Then we'll sit it out together.

(Wanderer walks over to them)

Wanderer You'll pardon me, I--I--

Leonard (Startled, looks up at Wanderer) Says did you jump out of the earth?

Wanderer I was sitting right over there.--(He points to bench)

Leonard Over there? You were sitting there all the time we were---

Wanderer Yes.

Leonard Then you heard---

Wanderer Yes. I heard the lady tell you she wants to go home, but she ain't got enough money.

Leonard (Gruffly) Well, what do you fit in?

Wanderer (Hesitatingly) Of course, I--I don't exactly fit in, but if the lady will accept my offer I---

Mary (Surprised) You don't mean you will---

Wanderer Yes. Why not? I could never spend five dollars for a better purpose.

Mary Well! The only way this could er happened---Say, Mister, you mighten know it, but you're an angel sent to me from Heaven.

Leonard (Angered) You mean he's a dope.--(He turns to Wanderer)

That's what you are, old feller, if you even think you can pull any of that stuff on me.

Wanderer I'm thinking you are all wrong--both ways---young man. I'm not a dope, and she's going home, if she still wants to.

Mary You give me the five and see how quick I'll go. I'll even let you take me to the station and put me on the train.

(Wanderer takes wallet from pocket, opens it, is about to hand Mary a five dollar bill.)

Leonard Put that bill back in your wallet before I knock you off your feet.

(Wanderer holds out the bill for Mary to take it. She looks at money, then at Leonard.--Wanderer looks at Mary. Seeing fear in her eyes he takes her bag from her, opens it, is about to drop bill into it, when Leonard lands him a blow. He staggers and falls.)

Mary (Eyes flashing anger) You'd never pick on a man your age.

(She helps Wanderer to his feet.)

Wanderer (To Len.) You were right. I must be a fool, or I'd know a man like you would make his threat good.--(He looks at the bill still in his hand)

Leonard I guess you'll put it back in your wallet now.

Wanderer Your guess is wrong.

Leonard (Gruffly) You have another smack coming if you don't put that money back in your pocket.

Wanderer (Smiles) Do you think you would have landed that blow if I expected it? Now I'm preparing you. I'm not half as dead as I look.

Leonard (Sneers) No?



Wanderer No. (He looks at Mary) Now, Miss--er--

Mary Mary. Just call me Mary.

Wanderer (Smiling) All right. Now, Mary, if you don't mind seeing your friend battered up a little bit I'll take my chances on your taking this five dollar bill.

(He hands Mary the bill. --Len. springs at Wand.-- Wand. lands him a blow. They clinch, then fight.--Mary tries to separate them, but is pushed aside.)

Mary (Cries out) Oh, stop! Will you stop! Len,--Len--he's licking you.--Quit now, quit before---Here comes a policeman, Len. You better quit. Quit, do you hear me?

Officer (Rushing on scene) Hey, there!--(He tries to separate them. Len pushes him aside.)---Say, feller, you push me like that again an' I'll push your nose in,---(He forces them part, then recognizes Wanderer.)---<sup>Well</sup> 1, look who is here! So, it's you, is it? An' ye looked like butter would'n't melt in your mouth. Well, that's one on me.

Wanderer (Smiling and panting) You mean it's another one on you.

Officer Right ye are. There's been a couple o' jokes on me to-night.

(He turns to Len.)---Say, young fellow, what's it all about?

---(No answer)---Well you'll have to say something ter the good, one o' you, if you don't want to take a nice free ride.- Take it from me, boys, you'll tell it to the judge.

Wanderer (Smiling) You would'n't do th at.

Officer Would'n't I though? Come on now. Say something, one o' you.-- He turns to Wand.) Did he try to hold you up?

Wanderer (Quickly) No--no--I--I--well, I'll tell you. I was sitting over there, and I heard this young woman---you see--she's

from the country.--From what I can understand she wanted to see New York, and he---

Officer (With an all-knowing air) I see. Now he's trying to shake her  
Wanderer On the contrary. He's trying to keep her, and she wants to go back to her husband.

Officer (Surprised) Her husband? Oh! So she left her husband for--  
Wanderer Well, she is sorry she left him. She wants to go back, but she has'n't got enough money for fare. She asked him for it, and he wouldn't give it to her. So I offered it. That led up to the fight. He wouldn't let her take it.

Officer He wouldn't let her take your money and he wouldn't give her any,---(He turns to Len.) Say, how the Hell do you think she kin get home? (To Mary) Excuse me, Miss. I didn't mean to fuss. A thing like this gets my goat,---(He looks at Len.)  
Young fellow, ain't you got nothin' ter say fer yourself?

Leonard (Flustered) Well--er--er--she wanted to go home---

Officer Yes, so I heard before. Then why didn't you give her the money fer her fare, or if you didn't have it, why, if this man was good enough ter give it to her, why didn't you let her take it  
Leonard I--I wanted her to---

Officer Yes. I know. You wanted her to stay here with you. I suppose you spent a little money on her, an' you think you didn't get your money's worth. I know your kind. I bump into them here every day. These corners in the park is the beginnin' an' finish o' many a girl,---(To Wand.)--You didn't change your mind about givin' her the money, did you?

Wanderer No. I gave it to her.

Officer (Patting Wand. on the back) Say, you don't start nothin' you



can't finish, eh?

Wanderer Not if I can help it.

Mary I'd like to get that nine twenty train if I can make it.

Officer Grand Central?

Mary No. The Penn Station.

Officer Then ye got no time fer foelling. You better hurry.

Wanderer (To Mary) You said you'd want me to take you to the station  
Do you?

Mary You bet your sweet life I do.

(Wanderer takes up his pack, puts his cap on, takes his cane  
goes over to Mary)

Mary I'll take your arm, Mister--er---

Wanderer Olson. My name's John Olson.

Officer Sweede, eh? You've come a long way, have'nt you? An' yer  
still goin! Expect to find yer wife some day?

Wanderer Yes. If she's alive I'll find her.---( He offers Mary his arm  
She takes it)

Officer (As they turn to go) Good luck to the both o' yer.

Mary&Wand. Thanks.

Mary (Turns after a few steps) Good-bye, Len.----(No answer)---

Officer (To Leonard) You're a bum sport.

Mary Yes. Isn't he? Good-bye, officer.

Officer Good-bye, Mary. I hope you make yer train.

Wanderer It'll be no fault o' mine if she does'nt.---(To Mary)--Come  
along now.---(They walk off)

(During most of the conversation Len. was at a distance from  
the officer, partly hidden by a tree, partly by dark shadow.  
As officer turns he sees Len. is looking on the ground for

something.)

Officer What ye looking for?

Leonard I lost one of my gold cuff links.

(Officer takes flash light from pocket, looks around on ground  
a moment)

Officer What's the matter? Can't ye see? There it is, laying right in  
front o' yer eyes.---(Len. goes down on hands and knees)---Can't  
see it? There, there it is,--~~there~~! Are ye blind? No, not there  
What the---( Officer bends down, picks up button)---I suppose  
if it was someting to eat ye'd want it put in your mouth fer ye  
( He is about to hand Len. the button. Light flashes on Len's  
face.--Officer sees his eye is black and almost closed. He  
looks at him a moment, begins to laugh.)---No wonder you  
could'nt see. The Swede closed one o' yer eyes.

Leonard Yes. And the other one don't feel so good either.

Officer (Still chuckling) Get up! Let me take a look at 'em. Yer  
might be needin'-----

(Leonard rises. Officer flashes light on him. He sees Len's  
collar is torn. Tie hangs to one side. Hair is disheveled.  
Shirt is pulled out. As Officer takes a good look at him, he  
begins to laugh loud and hearty, talking while he laughs)---

Officer Boy! He sure mussed you up.

( He laughs and laughs louder as

Curtain falls.

Act I. Scene II.

A Sunday morning, about four weeks later.

Living room of Mary's home in a small Pennsylvania village.

The room is nicely furnished but very untidy.

A curtain is hanging loose on one side, a pair of corsets on the sofa, a pair of silk stockings hanging on a lamp shade.

A glass pitcher and glasses, half filled, on a small table.

Papers on chair.

As curtain rises old fashioned bell is heard ringing again and again.

Mary (Shouts from bed room) Joe! Joe, don't you hear the bell?  
(Joe, Mary's husband, enters. He is a man about <sup>thirty eight</sup> years of age, looking  
and slow. He wears an apron, carries a basket of eggs in  
one hand, a jar of jam in the other.)

Mary                      Joe, where are you?

Joe                    I'm here, Mary.

Mary (From bed room) Open the door. Did'nt you hear the bell?

Joe            I was getting the eggs. I kind o' thought I heard it.

( He looks around the room, places basket of eggs on corsets lying on sofa, takes jar of jam in his left hand, opens door with his right.-----Wanderer is seen. He is carrying his pack and cane.-----Joe looks at him a moment.

Joe            Looking for some one? Or perhaps---

Wan I'm looking for Mrs Mary Case.

Joe                Mary Case lives here. Come right in.

Mary (Calls from bed room) Who is it, Joe?

Joe                    Some one to see you, Mary.

Mary (Calls back) Who?

Wan                    Tell her it is John Olson.

Joe (Surprised) Not the John Olson she met in New York, in Central Par  
Wan The very one.

Joe (Calls loudly) Mary, it's the old man you met in Central Park.

Mary (Calls in loud, glad tone) Well, for Heaven's sake! I'm sure glad we was talking about him last night, wasnt we?

Joe Yes, that's right. So we were.

Mary I'll be right in.--Get me my corsets, Joe. I left 'em some place.

(Joe places jam on table, looks around the room)

Joe I don't see 'em in here, Mary. Must be in the bed room.

Mary It's not here.--I tell you it's in there. Look on top o' the piano.

Joe     No, it's not there, Mary.

Mary (Shouts) Look behind, maybe it feel be ck.

(Joe stands on piano stool to look behind piano. He very nearly falls)

Joe      No, Mary, it's not there.

Mary (Impatiently) Where's my kimono? Oh, here it is! Now, if I find that corset in there----( She comes rushing in, attired in kimono, her hair in krimpers, stockingless, and wears loose slippers.--She runs over to Wanderer)---I'm sure glad to see you, Mr Olson,--- (She shakes his hand heartily)

Wan I'm thinking I should'nt have come so early in the morning.

Mary I'm thinking, you know ten o'clock is 'nt early in the morning, and if you came at six, you'd be as welcome here as the flowers in May ( She turns to her husband)-- What you got that apron on for?

Joe       I was gathering the eggs---and I got my new Sunday pants on.

Mary (Looking around room for her corsetsx Well you a'nt gathering eggs now, are you? ---(He removes the apron)--- Where did I put that

corset? I started to undress right here in this room last night. I know I did.----(She goes over to couch, picks up basket of eggs, sees corsets, casts a look of reproach at Joe)  
 ----What's this Joe?

Joe (Seeing corsets) The---the basket of eggs was on it.  
 Mary (Sarcastically) So you could'nt pick it up? What a head! What a head!--( She picks up corsets)---Take Mr Olson's hat and put his pack and cane over there in the corner. He's gonna stay and have dinner with us.

Wan ( As Joe is about to take his hat)--No. I'm just going to stay a little while.--You remember, I told you when I got up around this way, I'll drop in to see you.---I was really anxious to know---

Mary How things panned out here, eh?

Wan Yes. And I'm glad to see everything's all right; so--(He rises) I'll be on my way now.

( Mary throws down corsets, goes over to him, places her two hands on his shoulders and forces him down on chair again)

Mary You'll stay right here;--(She takes his hat from him)--and to make sure you don't get out while I'm dressing----(She picks up his cane and pack)---this goes into my room with me. You won't go without that.----(She rushes out, returns in a moment and grabs corsets)---It don't take me long to dress.--(She turns to Joe)--Joem make some lemonade for Mr Olson.--( As she is about to run to door)--No, you better wait till I come back.----(She rushes out)

Joe (Looks at Wan. as if he felt some excuse for his wife necessary) Mary's sort of a nervous girl, but she's good as gold.

Wan Yes. I found that out the day I met her in the park.

Joe She sure was a lucky girl to meet you.---(Mary rushes in again, looks around room, spies stockings on lamp shade, grabs them and rushes out again)--- She's temperamental too, awful teperamental.  
 Wan (Smiling)---Yes.

Joe She's talked a lot about you since she is back. You know, she never would have gone and left me like that--it was a girl friend o' hers that talked her into it.

Wan (Surprise in his tone)--A girl friend?

Joe Yes. She used to live here. She's a fly one. A decent woman gets on her nerves. She used to take trips to New York and bring bawk a lot o' Fairy Tales to Mary.--She's good, but --she likes the sort o' stuff Amy kept telling her about, the theatres and the dancin' and--- After all she's young and it really is'nt like if she went with a man. She would'nt do that, you know.

Wan (Hiding his surprise) No.--No. Of course not. I'm glad you had the godd sense to take her back.

Joe Folks around here advised me not to, but as long as she came back to me as clean as she went--- I told them all I could be the best judge of my own affairs.

Wan You did just right, but--er--tell me---now don't take what I'm going to say in the wrong light--- Suppose--now, mind you, I'm just saying suppose--suppose she had gone with a man, would'nt you have taken her back?

Joe No! Not if she <sup>crawled</sup> on her knees. No woman could disgrace me like that and then---me take her back? Never! Not even if I was sure I could'nt live without her. I'd die, before I'd take a thing like that back into my h eart and home.---( He looks at Wan., sees



he is thinking deeply.--Silence a moment. He keeps looking at Wan.)--Say, what made you ask me that question?

Wan (Hesitates)--Well, er--what you just said about her. You see I--  
Joe (Looks straight into Wanderer's eyes) --- What's on your mind, friend? If--if it's anything I ought to know---

Wan (A short chuckle)--My good man, It was'nt you I was thinking about, when I asked that question.

Joe (In suspicious tone)--No?

Wan No. It was'nt. Well, I can see I put something in your head that doesn't belong there at all, so it's up to me to take it out again.--I asked you that question, because I've traveled many hundreds of miles, perhaps thousands, in the hope of finding my wife.

Joe She left you?

Wan Yes--with another man.

Joe With another man! And you--you're looking for her, and you'll take her back if you find her?

Wan Yes.

Joe I can't understand. You look like a sensible man, and yet---

Wan Did you never hear of a thing called Cupid?

Joe Yes, I have.

Wan You know, he is supposed to be deaf and dumb and blind.

Joe Yes. I heard that too.

Wan Then why do we whisper into his ears the most beautiful words, we can think of, when we know he is deaf. Why do we believe we hear an angel sing, when his lips move--we know he is dumb, he can't talk. And why are we ready to cut out our heart just that he might see how great our love is, when we know he can't see---

Joe Bah! That's all <sup>fairy</sup> talk. In real life----

Wan Real life? There is no real life. When we're young we just go along dreaming, till we're old enough to wake up and realize it was just a dream. And when we do wake up, we find ourselves dead- that is, not quite dead enough to be buried, but too dead to dream any more, too dead to even care.

Joe I see you are very bitter. That's because you've been cheated.

Wan We've all been cheated. God sent us into a beautiful world to be real people, to be happy. Are we? You know and I know, everybody knows that there are no real people, that's why there is so little real happiness, and no real life.

Joe Well, I dunno. I find my life real, and I'm happy too.

Wan (Looks at him a moment)--I suppose you are, but that's because (He smiles)--well, because---

Joe Because what?

Wan (Smiles)--Let's talk about the weather.

(Mary comes rushing in, tying her apron strings as she enters)

Mary Now, you go an' make a pitcher of lemonade. I'll tidy up the room a bit.

Wan A glass of cold water will suit me.

(Joe still stands looking at Mary for further orders)

Mary (Decidedly) You're gonna have lemonade.--(Joe turns, is about to go to kitchen)--Joe, put some raspberry juice in, and, Joe, don't be stingy with it, and don't be stingy with the ice.

Joe All right, Mary.--(Exit Joe)

Mary (Goes to Wan., whispers) Be careful what you say. He thinks I went to New York with my girl friend. He's blaming it all on her.

Wan Yes. I know.

Mary You know? He told you?

Wan Yes.

Mary And you didn't let on?

Wan Of course not. When I saw he didn't know --you don't think I'd--

Mary (giving him a hearty kiss) You're a peach.

Wan (Smiles) A very fine reward --for a lie.

Mary A white lie, Mr Olson. A very white lie. It's sure a lucky thing for me you've got brains. If that o' mine ever found out the truth, well it would be just too bad for me.

Wan You mean, he'd--

Mary (If he heard it in the middle o' the night he would wait till morning to chuck me out. You do<sup>'nt</sup> know him.)

Wan I think I do. Just a few words gave me to understand; but you can't blame him, Mary. If that's his belief and he sticks to it, I'd call him a man for it.

Mary Yes. That's right, Mr Olson. The truth of it is, I don't love Joe, but I respect him, because, well, you undetstand, don't you?

Wan Yes. I do; but let's hope he never learns the truth.

Mary He won't. No one knows the truth about that but Amy, and she's the best pal a girl ever had. She'll never tell.

Wan Is that the girl---

Mary Yes. She's the one Joe blames for everything, just because she says a spade is a spade and nothing else. She's fine down in her heart, and that's more than you'd say for a lot o' good women around here, if you knew them like I do.

Wan I suppose so. There's a lot of---

Mary Hush. Here comes Joe.

(Enter Joe carrying a pitcher of pink lemonade and three glasses, one inside the other. He looks around for a place to put the pitcher

(Mary looks at pitcher, sees the spout is broken)

Mary (Picking up pitcher that stood on table) Why didn't you take this one?

Joe I'd have to wash it, wouldn't I?

Mary (To Wan.) Would you believe anybody could be as lazy as that? Here, put ~~your~~ pitcher down and take this one inside.--(He takes pitcher)---Take those dirty glasses too while you're at it. (Joe takes glasses that were half filled with water, puts one into the other, spilling contents all over himself.)

Mary (Looks at Wan.) If his heart was anything like his head, you can take it from me I wouldn't be here.---(To Joe, in tone of disgust)---Go ahead now. Take them into the kitchen.

Joe (Going to door, turns)--How about some cookies, Mary? They'll go good with the lemonade.

Mary Sure. Bring some in.----(As Joe leaves, Mary gathers papers in a pile and puts them on the piano)--He wants to show off his cookies. He baked them, and take it from me, they're good.

(She goes to table, pours lemonade into a glass.--Enter Joe with small plate of cookies. Mary hands Wanderer the glass.)

Wan (Taking glass) Thanks.

Mary (To Joe) Come on with the cookies.---(Joe goes to Wan., who takes one)--Take some more. They're good with lemonade.

Joe They're good without lemonade too.

Wan They look very good.

Mary Eat them and make sure.

Joe Come on. Take some more.

(Wan. smiles kindly, takes another cookie, takes a bite of it)

Wan This is good.

(Mary fills another glass with lemonade, walks toward Joe. He, thinking it is meant for him, is about to reach out for it, when Mary raises glass to her lips)

Mary It could be a little sweeter, Joe.

Wan (Drinks)--I think it's just right.

Mary (After drinking a little more)--On a second tasting I think it is Oh, Joe's fine on fixin' things like---Wait till you taste his roast chicken! He's got his own way o' cooking chicken, and, oh boy, I tell you it is delicious.

(Joe hands Wan. some more cookies)

Wan No, thank you, no more. I---

Joe (To Mary) It's just as well he don't eat no more cookies; it'll spoil his dinner. (Joe pours lemonade for himself)

Mary I guess you're right. It's only a couple o' hours to----(Bell rings)---(Joe is about to put his glass down)--- I'll open it, Joe.

(She places her empty glass on piano then opens door.--Joe, seeing Amy in door-way, looks horror stricken)

Mary Well! Amy! Of all the surprises! (As Amy comes into room)--Just got back from New York?

( Amy is about twenty three, immodestly dressed, over-rouged)

Amy No. I came in last night.--Hello, Joe!--( He does not answer) What's the matter? Gone deaf since I saw you last?---(She looks at Wanderer)---Say, who's your friend? I never saw him around here before.

Mary He's---

Joe (Interrupts) It's none o' your business who he is.

Amy (Mischievous in her eyes) Oh, so you ain't deaf--not yet?

Joe Mary, you promised me you'd be through with her for good!

Mary (Hesitatingly) Well--well, you see I---

Amy So he made you promise him that, ey? --(She looks at Joe defiantly) (To Mary) How'd you like to go to a swell party to-night, Mary?

Mary Whose party?

Amy Never mind whose party.--It's gonna be a swell one.

(Mary's eyes light up. She looks at Joe, then at Wan.--turns to Amy)

Mary I--I--Sure, I'd like to go, but--(Looks at Joe again)

Amy Say, it's yer back-bone you're needin' now. Your wish-bone ain't gonna do you a bit o' good. --Are ye goin' to the party to-night, or ain't ye?

Joe She ain't!

(Amy looks at Mary for some reply.--Mary is silent)

Amy (Shaking her head and smiling sarcastically)--No use! All wish-bone no back-bone at all. It's just a waste o' breath to---Well, I guess I'll be going.--(She turns to door, is about to pass Joe, stops, and looks at him a moment)--Joe Case! I'd give a year o' my life if I could show you up for what you are right now; but so long's she is stayin' with ye, I ain't makin' things any harder for her than they already are.--So you win till--till she wakes up. I don't think it will be very long now.--(To Mary)--Gimme a glass o' that pink lemonade, Mary, will you. I'm awfully dry.

Mary Sure---( Pours drink, hands it to Amy)

Amy (Holds up glass, looks at contents)--No use askin'---(She looks at Joe)--No. Of course not.--Well, anybody will drink anything, even water, when they're dry.--(As she raises glass to her lips, she looks straight at Mary)--Here's h opin' yer come to life before yer dead.--(She drinks, hands glass to Mary)--Good-bye, kid.--



Mary (As Amy goes to door)--Where's the party gonna be, Amy?

Amy Where <sup>would</sup> ~~there~~ a swell party around here be?

Mary Luck Turner's?

Amy Sure. When she throws a party, it's a party.

Mary Yes. They all say so.

Amy They all say so? You've been to more'n a couple of them. You ought to know.--(Mary looks at Amy, who notices Mary wants to speak)--You in look like you wanna say something. Why don't you?

Mary (Hesitates, lost for words)-- Go in' back to New York?

Amy You don't think I'm stayin' around here for good, do you?

Mary I thought maybe---When are you goin' back?

Amy You know how long it usually takes me to get fed up on this. If it was'n't that I want to see my mother once in a while I could forget this burg like it never would have been.--(She opens door partly)-- Well, the party will have to get along without you.

Mary Who's going to be there?

Amy Same crowd. You know 'em all, except a kid I brought along with me from New York. He's sick, and the doctor says he needs a farm to get him well.--Say! Ain't it funny how things are? Here's a fellow needs a farm to get well, and I got to get away from it, because it makes me sick.

Joe You can't get away from here soon enough to suit me.

Mary Now, look here, Joe Case! You can't talk to Amy like that while I'm around.

Amy Oh, so you're comin' to life, are you? I was beginnin' to lose all hope for you.-- (She comes back into centre of stage)

Joe (Provoked at Amy's coming in again)--I thought you was goin'

Amy (Smiles)--I was, but I changed my mind. I--

Joe Now, you get out o' here--and don't ever come back and ring this door bell again.

Mary (In angry tone) Say, who do you think you are anyway? You can't insult my friend like that right here in front o' me and get away with it.

Joe Did'nt you say---

Mary (Interrupts)--Yea--I said--I said--but where do you get off to order her out o' the house and tell her never to ring this door bell again?

Joe I meant just what I said.

Mary, Oh, you did, did you? Well, here's my answer to that.--(She turns to Amy)-- Amy, I'll be seein' you at the party to-night.

Amy Hurray for Mary!

Joe (To Mary, in decided tone)--If you go to that party to-night you ~~am~~ can't come back here no more!

Amy Fine! She can come right back to New York with me. How about it, Mary?

Mary Well, I--I don't know about that, but I do know I'm going to that party.

(During all this, Wanderer sits listening attentively, his face depicting the impressions it makes upon him.--He now looks at Amy.)

Wan Why don't you leave this young couple alone? They seemed to be contented befor you---

Amy Before I butted in.--Say, what makes you think they're so contented?

Wan I don't think. I know!

Amy Oh, you do. He told you so, I suppose. Well, now take a little o' my advice. DON't believe anything you hear around this burg, and only half o' what you see.

Wan You might be right in that, but I wish you'd take a little of my advice. I'm old enough to be your father. It's wrong to try and seperate a couple. It's more than that. It's sinful!

Amy Listen here, old man. All the wrong I ever did was only to myself, never to anybody else.

Wan But this is wrong, is'nt it?

Amy No, it ain't! And I'm going to take the trouble an' prove it to you. You pious people believe marriages are made by God, don't you?

Wan Yes. They're made in Heaven.

Amy (Pointing to Mary)--Well, ~~her's~~ her's wasVnt. Her's was made right here, back o' the pig pen. That's where she lived before she married him, and that's where ~~she~~ <sup>he</sup> used to hang around so he could see her ev'ry day, and tell her how she could be the mistress of his fine home, if she'd marry him.--She was as poor as a village church mouse so, of course, this house was her idea of a palace. God never meant this marriage.

Wan What difference does it make, as long as they're happy?

Amy You mean, he's happy.

Joe She's happy too. Ain't you, Mary?

Mary I was happy the first year. I suppose that was because I had things I never had before; but after a while I began to feel like---Oh, what's the use o' all this talk! It don't help any---

Amy It would, if you used your head.

Mary I'd go to that party all right, if I had a decent dress.

Amy That's easy. I'll send Mandy over with one o' mine.

Joe (In a rage) You send a dress in here I'll--I'll tear it to pieces!

Amy If you do, I'll come back here an' do a little tearin' myself, the kind that'll leave marks, maybe on yer face too.--So long, Mary. I'll be seein' you to-night.

Joe No you won't!

Amy How about it, Mary?

Mary I'll be there.

Joe (Gasping for breath) You know what I said, Mary, and you know I don't change my mind in things like that.

Mary You--you might just this once.

Joe I won't! If you put your foot out this door to go to that party you never can open it again.

Mary Say, what's the idea o' gettin' so darn bossy all of a sudden?

Joe It's fer your own good, Mary. You know what them parties are, an' you know how I feel about them things.

Mary Yes. I do. I don't make believe that I don't, like you do.

Joe (Shaking his head in the manner of: I don't understand) I don't know what you're talkin' about.

Mary Don't you? Then I'll tell you. I been wanting to fer a long time.

Wan Don't, Mary. Don't. You'll regret it if you do.

Joe (Looking at Amy with hatred in his eye) She did this. Ev'rything was all right till she came.

Mary No, it was'nt! Only last night while you was sleepin' the sleep o' the just, I was alaying there, wondering how long I could stand it. I was beginnin' to feel like I wanted to put my hands on yer throat and strangle you, because I felt, laying there alongside o' you, I was chained to you fer life.--Gosh!--I--well, this morning, when I woke up and saw you puttering around the house trying so hard to do things fer me,--I bega ter melt, the same as I did hundreds of other mornings after just such a night as last night.--How long do you think I can live like this and not go out o' my mind?

Amy (To Mary)--And I always pitied you, because I thought you ~~was~~ was just plain dumb!

Mary (Ignoring Amy's remark)--You know I didn't love you, Joe. You know I never did. Yer just hangin' on, like a drowning man hangs on to a piece o' wood.

Wan You can't blame him for that. When a man loves a woman, he'll hang on, till he's dashed to pieces.

Amy That's right! Fishes need food, and the world don't need fools.

Mary Joe, it had to happen some time, so it's just as well now as--- I couldn't go on like this much longer. I couldn't! I'm through tryin'.

Joe (Pleadingly)--Mary. Mary, in a little while you'll be sorry you said that. Then things'll come round like they always do.

Mary (Shakes her head)--No, Joe. No more. I'm quitting fer good.

Joe (Trembling with dread)--You--you wouldn't do that to me, Mary. You wouldn't!

Mary It's no use you walling ~~in~~ like a two year old kid, when you take away his candy.--You know I was never meant for you--and you was never meant for me.

Joe (In soft, walling tone)--You're breaking my heart, Mary. You know you are.

Mary Well, I think I can cure that.--- (She stands, looking at him silently a few moments)---Joe, you was dead sure I went to New York, because Amy talked me into it?

Joe She did, didn't she? She never denied it.

Amy No. I didn't, because I don't do things for what I can get out o' it, like you do. All you ever did fer her was because you want her; and what you want you'll pay for, but nothin' else.

Mary That's the truth.--(A pause)--Well, Joe, don't you want to know why I went to New York, and with who?

Joe What difference does that make, so long as you didn't go with a man.

Mary I--I---

Wan (Rises quickly)--Mary, Don't!

Mary (Ignores Wan.) I--I did.--I went with---You know Mrs Atkins had a boarder last summer. I went with him.

Joe (Horror stricken)--You--you---

Mary Yes! We registered at the hotel--Mister and ~~Miss~~---

Joe You dare stand there and tell me that straight to my face!?

Mary It's a cure fer your broken heart, ain't it?

Joe (Stops to think a moment, then a sudden ray of light is seen in his eyes)--It's a lie! I can see through it now. You got this up between you.~~as~~--It ain't true! It ain't! --- (He grabs Mary by the arm)--Mary! Mary, you didn't---God, I can't even say the words.-- You ~~didn't~~, Mary---you didnt!

Mary I did, Joe.--(She turns to Wanderer)--Ask him, he knows all about it.

(Joe looks at Wan., who lowers his eyes.---Joe then looks around like a man suddenly gone mad)

Joe (Shouts)--Get out! Get out, you sluts! Both o' you get out!

Mary All right. (To Amy) I'll be right with you. Won't take a minute. (Exit Mary)

Joe (In painful tone)--I--I still can't believe it.--(He wrings his hands)---I can't! I can't!---(To Wan.)---I was so good to her.

Amy Say, let me tell you somethin' you don't know. When somebody you don't love is pesting you with kindness from night till morning and from morning till night--well, if it was me, I'd sooner be hit over the head with a hammer and be done with it.

Joe (Voice choked with emotion)--It was all right, ev'rything was all



What difference does that make, through that door. It was all right till you---till you came through that door. It was all your doings--all!

Amy Maybe it ~~was~~ that she is going right now--but it would er happened sooner or later--and you know it. I'll bet she's in there now thanking the Lord, because she knows she's on the road to--

Joe (Shouts) --To Hell---going with you. ~~is is--~~

(Enter Mary, hat and coat on, carrying a valise)

Amy She don't have to go with me if she don't want to. All I wanted was to see the cage door open and the sparrow fly out.---Yer yapping at me---you don't understand what's it all about, do you? Well, I'll give it to you so you do. You been keepin' a sparrow in a canary bird's cage. You can see now--it couldn't be done. Nature would'n't have it that way.

(Joe is looking at Mary, body trembling, lips a-quiver).

Mary (Goes over to Wan.)--I'm awfully sorry this had to happen, just when you was here.

Wan Perhaps it ~~did~~ 'nt have to-----

Mary It did. It was only a matter of time.

Wan I'm afraid----

Mary You need'nt be. I'll be all right.

(She shakes <sup>hand</sup> with Wan.---Wan. looks at Joe, who is looking at Mary, despair and love in his eyes.)

Mary Good-bye, Mr Olson.

(Wan. is still holding Mary's hand, but looking at Joe. He sighs and shakes his head sadly)

Wan Too bad, too bad.

(Mary withdraws her hand, pats Wan. gently on shoulder, turns, and goes to door)

Joe Wai--wai--wait a minute, Mary.

Mary (Turns)--What do you want?

Joe (Swallows hard, rubs his hands together, looks like a man about to be murderd, pleading for his life)--I--I--I'm sorry fer--fer what I --fer what I said.

Mary You didn't say any more than you should of, considering how you feel about those things.

Joe I--I--don't --want you to go, Mary.

Mary (In surprised tone)--You want me after what I told you?

Joe I--I love you so, Mary, I can't go on livin' without you.

Mary Joe, the only thing I ever felt for you was respect, because I was sure you'd sooner die than look at a woman, well, at a woman, like you now know--I am---Gosh, I'm glad you said that! Now I can go away feelin' easy in my mind. You're no better than any other man, who pays for his woman.--Come on! Let's go, Amy.

(She is about to open door when Joe runs over, grabs her hand)

Joe Don't leave me, Mary. For God's sake, don't. I'll blow my brains out, Mary. I will! I will, and I'll haunt you after I'm dead. Do y you hear me? I'll haunt you! Night and day I'll haunt you.

Mary You might'nt believe it, Joe, but I ain't a bit afraid o' ghosts, not a bit. --- (She opens door)

Joe (Cries out in despair) -- Mary! Mary! Don't leave! <sup>now</sup> Don't! Don't!

Mary Come on, Amy.

(Joe drops his arms limply to his sides, lowers head, sighs)

Amy (Goes over to Wan.) Good-bye, old scout.

Wan (In low tone) Good-bye.

(Amy walks to door. Mary opens it, is about to walk out, when Amy turns, looks at Wan., and smiles)

Amy Say! Tell the truth! Ain't men fools?

(Mary goes out.---Amy stands in door-way, looking at Wanderer as

Curtain falls.

Characters:

The WANDERER.

ELLY LUND.

Old LADY.

Dr PETERSON.

NURSE.

Act II.

Scene: Patients waiting room of Dr Peterson's house in a suburb of Chicago.

The room is neatly furnished: a wide window back stage, a door to left leading to doctor's office, door to right leading to hall.

Time: A late afternoon in early Fall.

As curtain rises Wanderer and Ely "und are discovered seated about center of stage. Wanderer's pack is on the floor near his chair.

Ely is a Swede about thirty five years of age, the working-class type.

Both men are holding their hats in their hands.

Ely        Ey tell you, it's yooost like der Jenky says it: birds fren a better day flock to-gedder.

Wan.      You mean? (He looks towards door leading to doctor's office)

Ely        Sure. Ey mean der doctor. Because he's a Swede all der Swedes dey come to him.

Wan.      Yes. The Swedes are klannish.

Ely        Klannish? Vat's dat?

Wan.      It means--the same as the Yankey says--they stick to-gether.

Ely        Oh! Ey see. You know, Ey would never believe it dat you is a Swede if----

Wan       My name, ah?

Ely        Sure. If you don' tell me your name Ey would never know. You moost be here a long time in dis country.

Wan       Yes. I came here when I was a little boy with an old uncle of mine.

Ely        Oh! You don' been have no---

Wan       Father and Mother? Yes. I had, and still have. They're home in Gothenburg.

Ely        Oh, Gothenburg you come from! Ey come from Stockholm.

Wan       When my uncle went back he settled in Stockholm.

Ely        Your uncle went back! En he left you here all alone?

Wan       I did'nt want to go back. You know, when a kid, fifteen years old sees a chance of being his own boss, especially in a great country like this, why go back and do what Papa and Mama wants him to do?

Ely        Oh! You was a bad boy.

Wan       (A soft sigh) Yes. I suppose I was; but I really did'nt expect to spend the rest of my life here. I thought---

Ely        Ey betcha you taught yooost like me. Ey was gonna go back home too ven Ey get plenty money, en Ey could show off en Ey could bring home lots o' nice presents for every body, den---

Wan       (Smiling) Then I suppose you got married---

Ely        You suppose! Six girls en von boy ain't no suppose. It's sure.

(Wanderer laughs)--You can laugh, but Ey can't. Believe me Ey got plenty worries-- en troubles--all kinds o' troubles.--En den Dr Peterson he say---You know Dr Peterson ~~maxxax~~ He's good doctor, only Ey don' understand. Always he say:nobody gotta have troubles ven dey don' vanna.--He say you moost tink you don' got 'em.--Vall, vy should Ey tink lies! Ey knoe Ey have got 'em.

(Wanderer laughs)

Nurse     (Entering, to Ely) Doctor is ready to see you.

(Bell rings. Nurse exits by door leading to hall)

Ely        (Rising) Ey should be glad if you would sometime come to see me.



3 40

Kly (A moment's search in his pocket, producing card) Here is de address from de place ver I verk. Come some time der, six o'clock. Ey take you home to my house for supper.

(Enter Nurse, followed by a little old lady. Nurse places chair for her; but old lady is looking first at Wanderer then at Kly.-- Kly is about to follow Nurse into doctor's office)

Lady Yeast wait a minute, mister.--(She goes over to him, looks into his eyes.--Then her eyes wander slowly from his head to his feet.-- Again she looks into his eyes.--She seems perplexed as she asks) You--Your name is maybe John Olson?

Ky No. Dere's John Olson. Over der.

(She turns, looks at Wanderer)

Lady No. It don' bane him. (She walks over to Wanderer, looks him over more closely, shakes her head, sighs deeply)--No, no. Many John Olsons Ey see--only my Yonnie he----

Nurse (Enters, to Kly) The doctor's waiting for you.--(Exit Nurse)

Kly (Quickly) Yes, yes, Ey come.--Good-bye, Mr Olson. Don' forget you should come. Don' lose de card.

Wan I won't.

(Exit Kly)

Lady (Sighing) Vell, Ey go now---

Wan Don't go, Madam. If you're in a hurry I don't mind waiting. You can go in ahead of me.

Lady I don' come to see de doctor. Ey don' bane sick.--(She hesitates) Vell, Ey tell you. My boy, John, Ey look for him. Mrs Esterberg, dat's de lady ver Ey sleep last night----

Wan Mrs Esterberg? In Charles Street?

Lady Yes.

4

Wan I was her boarder for the last three weeks.

Lady Ey know dat. Dat's vy Ey come here. Ey ask her--(She's looking for words)-- Vell, Ey Ey go always ver it is Swedish people. Ey Ey know my Yonnie he would go ver it's only Swedish people. So Ey ask her, maybe she know somebody John Olson.

Wan Oh! So that's why you came here? She told you about me.

Lady Yes. She told me you bane sick. You go see Dr Peterson. Ey--Ey don' can wait. Ey thought maybe--maybe it's my Yonnie.--Vell, it's von more place yet Ey like to go to-night. Ey got de address (She digs down in her skirt pocket, produces a piece of paper) Please, mitout my reading glasses Ey don't see so good.--(She hands him the paper)

Wan ("Reads") John Olson. 38 St Andrews Street.--Another John Olson?

Lady Yes. Lots Of John Olsons it's here.--St Andrews Street is far away from here?

Wan Well, really, I don't know. I'm a stranger in this town too; but I'll ask the nurse when she comes in. She'll know.--(He places chair for her)--You might as well sit down while you wait She'll be in any minute.

Lady (Sitting down) You--you--Mrs Esterberg told me you go 'round a lot.

Wan You mean I--I travel from place to place?

Lady Yes. Travel, dat's wat she say.--You look for somebody too?

Wan Yes.

Lady Your boy maybe too?

Wan No. My wife.

Lady (Shocked) Your wife! Oh, dat's too bad. Vell, maybe sometime yeast ver Ey would go Ey would see her---Tell me how she look.

Wan Well--er--she's a brunette.

Lady Brunette?

Wan She's--er--she's not a blonde like most of us Swedes. She has brown hair and large green eyes.

Lady Green eyes?

Wan Most people would call them Hazel eyes, but I know they're green. They're beautiful eyes, they're--but it's no use. You could never find her. You--you see, I, I'm pretty sure she changed her name; but I might run into your boy some day.-- You're sure he didn't change his name?

Lady (Quickly) No--no.

Wan Then tell me what he looks like. I might---

Lady Sure I tell you.--My Yennie he got big blue eyes, and hair? Ven de sun shines on it it's yest like gold, an' ven he laughs you could know him for sure. It's yest like de bell in de church ven it rings.

Wan (Smiles, repeats) Blue eyes, golden hair, and when he laughs, it sounds like a church bell. Well, you can never tell---How old is the boy?

Lady My Yennie? He soon gonna be forty years.

Wan (Surprised) Forty years! --I thought you were looking for a young boy.

Lady Oh, no, no. My Yehn he's now a big man. Ven he was yet a little boy he was already big an' straight like a soldier.--You know, his Papa he always say to me: Christine,--(At the mention of the name Wanderers face depicts a great shock)--My tink Yennie he's gonna be a general.---(She looks up at Wan., sees the great change in him, rises quickly from chair)--Wat is?---

(In tone of alarm) Oh, you bane sick! Ey call de doctor!

Wan (As she is about to run to door,) No. No, don't. Please don't I'm--I'll be All right in a minute.--(Lost for words)--I--I--often get these spells.--(He tries to smile)--That's--that's why I came to see the doctor.

Lady Well, De doctor he should see you ven--ven--(She can't quite express herself)--Well, ven you--ven you get dis.---Ey call him.

Wan (As he grabs her hand) No, no! Sees, I --I'm almost over it now.

Lady Look, your hand is yet shaking!

Wan (Trying hard to appear calm) That--that will stop in a minute too. I--I know. It's notthe first time.

Lady Den sit down.--Ey ask de nurse she bring for you a little vater.

Wan (Trying hard to hide his anxiety) I'll--I'll sit down, but I don't want any water.--Here! You sit down, and I'll sit too. ( She sits down. Wan. pulls chair close to hers and sits down)

Lady To bad you bane get so sick! You feel bedder a little?

Wan Yes, yes. I fehl a lot better.

(He looks steadily and directly into Old Lady's eyes)

Lady Vy-- vy you look at me so--so---

Wan You--you look like some one I knew a long--long time ago; but of course it's---You said--your name is Christine?

Lady Yes. My name is Christine. Vy you ask?

Wan Because I knew some one who told me his mother's name is Christine.

Lady (Rises quickly, trembling with anxiety) You--you know somebody his--his name is Christine?--Who? Ver--ver is he? Maybe--maybe--

Wan Now, now don't get excited, little mother! Come, sit down.--  
(He takes her hand, gently forcing her back in the chair)--  
We want to make sure before--- You see, I wouldn't want you to be disappointed.

Lady (Almost afraid to utter the name) His--his name is Yohn--Yohn Olson?

Wan Yes.

Lady Vy, vy you not tell he before?

Wan Well, I--I'd forgotten all about him until you said your name was Christine. That--that reminded me.

Lady (Rises again) Oh, Please, please take me by my Yonnie! (She looks at Wan.) No, no, you must see de doctor. You're sick. Ey can see you're sick.--You know ver he live?

Wan (Hesitates) Yes.

Lady (Produces card again) Here, write for me de address on dis side (She's almost hysterical) Ey vill go--Ey vill find him!  
(Wan. takes card reluctantly, looks at it a moment at a loss what to say or do.--Old lady looks at him beside herself with anxiety)

Lady Your--your hand is shaking yet. You can't write. Tell me de address. Ey remember it, Ey ven't forget. Tell me!---He is looking straight into her eyes, but does not speak)

Lady Vy--vy you don' tell me?

Wan Because--because---Hana, I'm your John! Your John!  
(Her eyes open wide. She stands looking at him breathlessly, astounded. For a moment or two she just gazes into his eyes; then

slowly her eyes wander from his face downward to his shoes, then again to his face)

Lady (Scries out despairingly) No! No! My Yohnnie he's --- (She shakes her head, as if it were utterly impossible)---(It can not be that this man is her son).

Wan (Sadly) I understand. It's hard for you to believe--but I am---Mama--I'm your John!

(Old lady looks at him again for a few seconds, steadily, then speaks as if she feared the answer)

Lady My--my Yohn --he got --er--a little ship--a boat--here  
(She points to her inner arm, a little below the elbow)--  
His cousin Teodor--he vonce make it for him---ven he vas yet a little boy. Mit a pin he make it.--Papa Olson he say dat never could come off.---(She continues looking into his eyes.)

(Wanderer smiles slowly, sadly, raises his sleeve. She looks at his arm and, without a word, falls into his arms sobbing.--He pats her gently on the back and strokes her hair lovingly. Nothing is heard for a few moments but the sobbing of the Old Lady,--then--

Wan Poor, little Mama.

Lady My Yonnie! My boy Yonnie! (She looks at him again) Ey--Ey don' know my boy! No blue eyes, no more golden hair! (She again looks at him from head to foot, sobs,) Oh, my Yonnie, my poor Yonnie! (She kisses him again and again. He takes handkerchief from his pocket and dries her tears.) Oh, Yonnie, Yonnie! (She again looks him over, shakes her head sadly) My boy, my Yonnie! (A sob) Ey don' tink Ey find my

boy like (She sobs)

(He again dries her tears, takes her in his arms)

Wan Don't cry, Mama. I'm not so very sick. A good tonic will put me on my feet again.--(He pats her gently) Don't cry.

Lady (Still in her son's arms) Vi you don' write to Papa? He would send you money.

Wan I didn't need any money.

Lady (Looking at his coat and shoes again) Now--now you--Ey got plenty money, Yonnie. Papa go mit you to Stockholm, to Dr Freed. He make you vell.--Papa, he was so sick--he make him vell. You vill see, Yonnie, so quick you vill be vell. (She pats his face and strokes his hair tenderly. Her voice trembles as she looks into his eyes again) My boy! My boy!

Wan You--you want me to go back to Gothenburg with you?

Lady Sure. You come home mit Mama. Your wife she come too.--Ey got monet for all.--(He lowers his eyes.-- She, reminded)--Oh yes! You bane tell you looking for your wife.--Yonnie! She bane go away from you? She den' come back no more?

Wan (Shakes his head sadly) No.

Lady (Stands looking at her son a moment, shakes her head sadly)

Dat's vy you--dat's vy it is no more blue eyes-- no more golden hair! Dat's vy you sick? She den' never come back, Yonnie?

Wan No. She never came back; but I'll find her yet. (In determined tone) I vill find her!

Lady (Surprised) Yonnie, you go look for her mere?

Wan I've been looking for hrt for fifteen years. I'll never give up. Never, I tell you, till I find her!

Lady Fifteen years, Yonnie. Yeast fifteen years since vee got from you--(She digs down into her skirt pocket, takes out an old letter)--- See dis letter? You write you come home mit your wife. Den no mare letter come.

Wan (Tries hard to surpress a sob) Then--no more wife--Mama.

Lady Den vy you don' come home?

Wan (Sadly) Home? No place on earth could be home for me without her. Nothing else in the world meant anything but she.

Lady (Sadly) Oh, Yonnie! Ven your wife love you, you don' got to loo for her. She would come back to you.

Wan Maybe--maybe she's ashamed. Maybe she's afraid.

Lady (In quivering tone) You sick, my boy.--(She swallows a sob) Ey want you should find your wife--only--(She shakes her head sadly) Ey--Ey see you can't go no more.--(Her lips quiver)--Come mit want Mama, come Yonnie. Ey vill do for you vat you vill want, Yonnie. And Papa, you know he vill be so good to you. Come mit Mama. Come home, Yonnie.

Wan (Looks at her wistfully) I remember once when you were very sick Dr Lundberg told Papa he didn't think you would live throught the night. Do you know what Papa said to him?

Lady (Shakes her head) No.

Wan He said: Doctor, if God takes my Christine, He's got to take me too. I can't live without her. -- That's how Papa loves you.-- That's how I love my wife. Life means nothing without her.

Lady (Drops her head and clenches her hands. A moment's silence, then she raises her head quickly. A sudden thought)---Yonnie, Ey go mit you. Ey can walk a lot. Ey don' get even a little bit tired. Maybe Ey be lucky for you. Maybe togetaer ve vill find her.



Lady (Looks at him expectantly) Sure, Yennie, Ky vill go mit you.

Wan (Smiling sadly) That's impossible, little Mama. You can't do that.

Lady Ky can. Ky an strong. Lemme, oh, Yennie, lemme go mit you.

Wan You're talking like a child.

Lady Ky talk like a Mama.

Wan Yes. I know a mother's love is very great; but she can't see what's---

Lady Ky see. Ky see you sick because you want your wife.--Ky want you should find her--only now--now, Yennie, you need Mama. Maybe--maybe you vill stay here mit me a little vile. Yeast a few weeks. Ky vill ask de doctor vat Ky should do for you, en den, ven you vill be vell---

Wan That would only make it harder for you when I go.

Lady No, Yenné. No. Ven Ky see you vill be vell--Ky-- (She tries to suppress a sob)--Ky ven't cry ven you go away.--(Alump in her throat)--Ky ven't. Ky ven't.

Wan (Takes her in his arms) Poor little Mama. If you knew how you're hurting me you would'nt----

Lady (Looks up into his eyes sadly, her lips quiver as she speaks) Hurt you, Yennie? Ky don' want to hurt you. Ky--Ky only--- (She sees the determined expression in her son's face)-- Ven--ven--you--go vay, Yennie?

Wan To-night, Mama. Right from here. I'm going.

Lady (Cries out) No. No, Yennie. To-night you stay mit Mama.--(She is trembling with emotion)--Ky--Ky want to talk mit you, you and me alone.--(He shakes his head sadly)--Ky want to tell you about Papa mid Gretta an' de children. Gretta got a little boy. He looks

yeast like you ven you vas a little boy--yeast like you. An'--an anodder little boy, he look yeast like Papa.-----

(Enter Nurse)

Nurse (Goes over to table, pulls out a drawer, takes from it a small package. As she closes drawer, she looks up at Wanderer) Doctor will be ready to see you in just a few moments.

(Nurse exits)

Lady I wait for you here, Yennie.

Wan Don't, Mama. Please don't. It will make so much harder for both of us. I'll come home when I find her.--I feel I'm going to find her very soon.--I never felt like--I always knew I'd find her, but it always seemed so far away; and now--(A ray of hope in his eyes)-- it seems so near.

Nurse (Enters. To Wan.) Doctor's ready for you.-- (She leaves)

(Lady's eyes open wide. She stands, hands clenched, chest heaving, mouth partly open, lost for words or action)

Wan (Takes her hands in his again)--Mother-love makes great sacrifices---

Lady Yes, my boy. Yes.

(Wan. drops her hands, places one hand under her chin, raises her head, kisses her, first on the lips then on the forehead)

Wan Good-bye, Mma. Now, no crying.

Lady (Through quivering lips)--No--no crying.

(Wan. picks up his pack and cane then turns and looks at his mother again)

Wan Tell Papa I'm well, and I'll come home soon.

(He drops his head a moment, then raises it quickly, looks about for his hat, sees it on chair, takes it and is about to

walk to door)

Lady (Cries out) Yohn, --Yohn, kiss Mama. Yeest vonce more kiss Mama (Wan. turns, throws down pack, goes to mother, kisses her tenderly. He heaves a deep sigh, picks up pack, walks slowly out. She stands looking at door a few moments. --Then she turns, walks to opposite door leading to front hall. She opens it, stands with hand on knob a moment, thinking, closes door, walks slowly back to centre of stage, looks into space a moment, then decides to sit down.---

In a moment of two bell rings. Nurse enters, passes Lady, going to open front door, leaving door to hall open as she goes out.)

Nurse (From hall) A scarf? Wait a moment. I'll go in and see. (She returns, looks around the room, then speaks to Lady)--A patient left his scarf here. Did you happen to see it?

Lady A scarf? No. Ey don' see no scarf.

(Exit nurse to hall again)

Nurse (From hall) No. There's nothing in there. I'm sorry. Good-bye.

(Enter nurse. Lag rises, goes to meet her)

Lady Nurse, Ey---

Nurse Yes. I know. You're getting impatient, and I'm afraid you'll have quite a while to wait yet.

Lag Ey--Ey don' come to see de doctor.--Ey-- My Yennie, he's de patient.

Nurse Your Jennie? He has'nt come yet, has he?

Lady Oh, Yes. Yennie. He bane yeest go in. You know, you call him.

Nurse You mean---

Lady Sure. Sure, dat's my Yennie.--(Nurse looks at her smilingly) Will you please do me a little favor?

Nurse Why, of course, if it's possible.

(Lady digs down into her pocket, takes from it a pocket book. She opens it carefully, takes out a few coins, is about to hand them to nurse)

Nurse What's that for?

Lady Ey want you should buy for yourself something nice.

(Nurse, smiling kindly, takes coins from her also pocket book. She drops coins back into pocket book, then hands it back to Lady)

Nurse Thanks just the same.--Now, what is it you want me to do? Just tell me, and I'll be glad to do it for you.

Lady Ey---Ey want you should tell my Yennie, ven Ey speak mit him-- Ey forget-- Ey got to tell him something yet. Will you please be so good tell him, Ey wait for him.

Nurse Is that all you want me to do?

Lady Sure. Yeest tell my Yennie Ey wait for him.

Nurse I'll tell him--(She pulls a small rocker across the floor)-- Here! Sit down! This is a comfortable little chair.

Lady (Looks at her sweetly) Tanks.--(Old Lady sits down.--Nurse goes to door)--You don' forget to tell him?

Nurse Don't you worry. I won't forget.

(Exit nurse.---Old Lady rises, drags rocker to corner of room, then places pocket book back into her pocket. Sits down again, smooths wrinkles in her skirt, sighs heavily, begins to rock slowly to and fro, looking into space as Curtain falls.)

## Act II. Scene II.

Dr Peterson's office.

He is the usual type of a fairly prosperous doctor of a small town.

A door leading to waiting-room about right centre, another back stage, left.

As curtain rises, Dr P. is standing, stethoscope in hand. Wanderer's coat and shirt are on a chair.

Dr You may put on your shirt and coat now.

(Wan. takes shirt, is putting it on with difficulty. He appears weak.)

Dr (Rings bell)--- My good man, what you need---(Enter nurse)  
Bring a little water, Miss Carlson.

Nurse Yes, Doctor. (Exit nurse)

Dr You see, your--well, you've got to know the truth,--your hearts in pretty bad shape. You'll have to slow down a little bit.

Take it easy.-----(Enter nurse, is about to hand glass of water to doctor, when he motions to her to hand to Wan.

Wanderer is about to drink) --Wait a moment!---(He takes a small tablet from a bottle, hands it to Wanderer.---) Put this on your tongue and swallow it with a little water.---(Wan

does so, hands glass to nurse. Wan. takes coat from chair, is about to put it on. Nurse helps him, doctor watching him closely.---(Sit down now. Take it easy. There's no rush.--(To nurse)---Any more patients out there?-- (Dr sits down)---

Nurse No. Just this patient's mother.--(To Wan.)---She told me, there's something important she forgot to tell you, so she'll be waiting for you.

(For a moment Wan. looks at nurse, not knowing what to say, then

Wan (In low, undecided tone) Thanks, Miss.

Nurse You're welcome.---(Phone rings. Nurse takes up receiver)---

Dr Peterson's office.---Yes.---Just a moment, please. Hold the wire.

(To doctor)--- A patient can be here in about an hour. Will you see him doctor?

Dr (Hesitatingly) Well, yes; but tell him not to make it any longer than an hour.

Nurse (Speaking into 'phone) Yes. The doctor will see you, but please try to get here within the hour.---(She begins to busy herself about the instrument cases)---

Dr Yes, Mr Olson, you have to slow down. You simply must give up this wandering about. You can't keep it up any longer.

Wan But, doctor---

Dr Yes, I know. You explained that all to me the last time you were here; but, man alive, you just can't go on. Don't you understand? Your condition won't allow it.

Wan I understand, but I'm afraid you don't.---(Dr looks up at him sharply)--- I beg your pardon, doctor. I don't mean that you don't understand your profession. I mean, you understand why I can't give up searching for my wife.

Dr Well, yes. I--I--think I can; but there's a limit to everything.--- There are two very good reasons why you should give it up. One is, you're chasing a rain bow, the other, even if it were possible to catch a rain bow---(He shakes his head)--- you couldn't. You'd die in the attempt.

Wan But life without her doesn't mean anything to me. So I'm willing to try.

Dr You'll pardon me if I call you a fool.---If I didn't, I'd be

thinking it just the same.--Your wife left you for another man, didn't she?

Wan Yes.

Dr Then she never loved you.

Wan I'll never believe that, till I hear it from her own lips.

Dr Lips, that have been kissed by another man thousands of times! Who can believe them?

Wan I can.

Dr You're a strange sort of person.

Wan Why? Because I know we humans have so little control. --We--- It's the way of the flesh.--I've often done something that I knew was wrong, and wished I had'nt done it, when my mind became clear to reason.

Dr Your comparison is childish, my good man. Of course, everyone does something sometime or other that they're sorry for--that they wish they had'nt done; but these things, great or small, few or many, how can they compare----(He looks straight into Wanderer's eyes)--- When a man gives a woman his love and his name, he lays his future, his whole life at her feet. And then she leaves that man for another.--She has'nt done <sup>just</sup> something wrong. She's done something that can destroy a life.--For that, to my way of thinking, there is no pardon, not even in the eyes of God.

Wan I grant, that her sin is great,---but I love her.

Dr It seems God thought feels were necessary on this earth, so He made the thing called love.

Wan (Looking at doctor steadily)--Have you--ever--tasted --of that thing called--love?

Dr (Hesitates) Yes.

Wan Then, suppose she left you as my wife left me, would'nt you

consider taking her back?

Dr I--I don't think I would.

Wan Ah! You don't think, that means you're not quite sure.

Dr I am sure. Just because a man loves a woman, --that's no reason-- If I was meant to be a monkey, I'd been born one.

Wan (Smiling) You know there's great love among monkeys.

Dr Yes, but who wants to be a monkey?

(Phone rings.)

Nurse (Taking up receiver) Dr Peterson's office.--Who?-- (Her eyes open wide. She looks at doctor, then back at receiver, then at doctor again.---Doctor is looking at Wanderer. She hesitates as she tries to find words.--Speaks into receiver) I--I--just a moment, Mrs Peterson. I'll---

(At mention of the name doctor turns quickly to nurse)

Dr (In startled tone) Who--who is that, Miss Carlson?

Nurse (Almost afraid to mention the name) It's Mrs--Mrs Peterson, Doctor (Doctor looks at her a moment, as she stands rigid, holding receiver)

Dr Tell her---ask her---(Forcing himself to speak with authority) Ask her what she wants.

Nurse (To 'phone) Mrs Peterson--Doctor's busy just now. He wants me to ask you----( She looks at doctor, understands the situation, speaks into receiver again)-- Oh, I see. Yes.---( Doctor is watching nurse anxiously)--Hold the wire a moment, please.--(She looks at Wanderer, then at doctor)-- Doctor, Mrs Peterson wants--er--suppose you go upstairs and take the other 'phone?

Wan (Rises quickly)-- I'll come back again later. You go right ahead and use this 'phone.

Dr (Flustered) No--No. I--I prefer--sit right down. I'll be back



in a few moments. (He rushes out by door leading to up-stairs rooms.----A few moments silence.--- Nurse looks at Wanderer, int intimating, she anxious to divulge some important information)

Nurse (Timidly) That--that was Mrs Peterson on the 'phone.

Wan Yes. I--er--heard you mention the name.

Nurse She's a-- She's the doctor's wife.

Wan I would'nt have to guess very hard after hearing the name.

Nurse (Smiles) Lots o' Petersons in this town.

Wan Yes. I suppose so; but I knew in a moment it was his wife or his sweetheart.

Nurse There's a big difference between a wife and a sweetheart.

Wan No difference at all in the expression of the eyes--for the one he really loves.

Nurse Doctor never loved any other woman but his wife.

Wan They must be very happy.

Nurse They would be if---Your name is--er--

Wan Olson.

Nurse Oh yes. Names escape my memory so very quickly.---(She looks at him a moment)--Mr Olson, the doctor and his wife were very happy once.

Wan (Surprised) Once?

Nurse Yes. Once. He's hearing her voice now for the first time in three years.

Wan (Shocked) That sounds almost unbelievable.

Nurse She eloped with an old sweetheart of hers---

Wan Good God! Do you think they'll get to-gether again?

Nurse I'm sure they will. She just told me she wants to meet him and talk things over.--(Wan. looks at her bewildered)-- I--I know what you are thinking about, that's why I told you.

(Door suddenly bursts open. Doctor rushes in. Every fibre in his body depicts anxiety. He goes over to desk, fumbles among some papers, then looks up at nurse.)

Dr Where's my--er-- I had it here a moment ago--my prescription pad, where is it, Miss Carlson?

Nurse It's right there. I'll get it for you. (She hands him the pad)

( Doctor sits down, quickly writes a prescription, hands it to Wan

Dr I'd like to have a little talk with you, but er---

Wan Yes. I see. It's something urgent. You've got to go.

Dr Go? How did you know I was---

Wan (Seriously) I--I--imagine so. Doctors are always called when they (He stops short)-- least expect it.

Dr Yes--Yes.-- (He turns to nurse) Miss Carlson, will you please run upstairs and get my overcoat.

Nurse It's right out here in the--Oh, you mean your Sunday coat?

Dr Yes. Yes. My Sunday one.--(As nurse exits) --Hurry, fill you please (Wan. looks at doctor, smiles)--My gloves, I--I put them--Oh, yes I threw them on the hall rack.

Nurse (Returning with coat, handing it to doctor) Your hat I think it will need a little brushing.

Dr Yes.--Yes, --er-- (Nurse rushes out. Doctor is putting on coat. He thrusts hand into pocket, pulls out a pair of gloves)--Now, where did I---

(Enter nurse, hat in hand, sees gloves in doctor's hand also his puzzled look)

Nurse I put your best gloves in your pocket. I thought you'd like to wear them with that coat.--(She hands him the hat)

Dr (Hurriedly) Yes.--Thanks, very thoughtful of you.--(Looks at his

watch) Fifteen minutes! Have'nt a moment to lose.---(He goes to door, turns to Wanderer, talks excitedly)-- Mr Olson, that prescription is something for your heart. Take them only when you have to, and remember, take things easy.

Nurse (As doctor is about to open door) Oh, doctor, how about that patient who said he'd be here in an hour?

Doctor (Stops to think a moment) Well, now, let me see. You'll have to ring him up and tell him to come to-morrow.

Nurse But he didn't give me any 'phone number.

Dr Look him up in the book, and if he has'nt any 'phone--(Steps to think a moment) Well, I'm sorry to have to disappoint him. It can't be helped.--Good-bye, Mr Olson.

Wan Good-bye, doctor. Wish you luck.

(Doctor startles, looks first at Wanderer, then at nurse, then at Wanderer again)

Dr Thanks.

(He turns, opens door quickly, walks out.)

(Wanderer and nurse exchange smiling glances.)

Curtain.

# Act II. Scene III.

Scene same as Scene I.

Two hours later.

As curtain rises, all is quiet, except for the slight creaking of the rocking chair.--- The room is in total darkness, a very faint glimmer of light comes through the window that stretches across from door leading to doctor's office to door leading to hall.

A moment's silence, then bell rings.

Door leading to doctor's office opens. Nurse enters, crosses room to door leading to hall; opens it, goes out, leaving door partly open.

Nurse (From hall) Oh, I'm sorry, very sorry. Doctor couldn't wait. You know, you said you'd be here within the hour. It's almost two hours since you rang.

Voice (From hall) Yes. My know. Had a blow-out on the way coming over.

Nurse Can you come to-morrow morning?

Voice No, Miss. My can only come about this time. My work till five thirty.

Nurse Well, you can come to-morrow about this time. I'm sure the doctor will see you.

Voice Tanks, nurse. My will come to-morrow, a little bit earlier. My can come even My don't have no blow-out.

Nurse All right, then.

Voice Good-bye.

Nurse Good-bye. Sorry, had to disappoint you.

(Door is heard closing.---Nurse enters. She presses button for light. Sees old Lady in corner of room. She stands looking at old Lady a moment)

2

Nurse What did you come back for? Who opened the door for you?

Lady Ey don' come back. Ey don' go vay.

Nurse You mean to tell me you've been sitting here all this time?

Lady Ey--Ey bane tell Ey wait for my Yonnie.---(She rises, goes over to nurse, almost afraid to ask the question)---You--you done bane forget to tell him?

Nurse (Hesitatingly) I--I did'nt forget.  
(Lady Breathes a sigh of relief, goes back to her rocker, sits down again)

Lady Meest be de doctor speak mit him. My landlady ver I live she tel me, Dr Peterson he's a fine man. He speak mit all de patients yecost like he be no doctor at all; an' my Yohn, he speaks nice too. He--he don' look so--- He got nice clothes--only he-- he travel around a lot, en--en he don' like---Ven he was a little boy he don' never like to get dressed op.  
(While Lady speaks, nurse stands looking at her sympathetically. A few moments silence)

Lady Vat's de matter? Vy you look at me like---

Nurse De you live very far from h ere?

Lady Ey--Ey don' walk so fast--'but fifteen minutes it takes me. Vy you ask?

Nurse And your son, does he----

Lady Oh, my Yohn he go vay to-night. He--he gotta go vay.--Right from here he go.

Nurse (In shocked tone) To-night? He's leaving right from here, and he did'nt say good-bye to you?

Lady (Her eyes alight) Sure he say good-bye to me, only he don' know Ey wait for him here, till you tell him.

24

Nurse (In hollow tone) Oh, you look so tired. Suppose you---

Lady Ey don' be tired. Ey sit here an' Ey rock. Ey like dis little chair.--None too I got a little chair yecost like dis.--You got someting maybe to do inside. Ey Don' be lonesome. Ey look out de window. It's nice here, you----( She looks at nurse, sees the pitiful expression in her eyes)--- You vanna go tell him Ey wait so long. Ey look tired.--Dat's vat you vanna do. Ey can see it in your eyes.--Don' be sorry. Ey like he should speak mit de doctor. He--he is'nt speaking to the doctor.

Nurse

Lady (Rises quickly)--- No? Den vat he---(She places her two hands quickly over her chest, depicting sudden calamity)-- He maybe got --er--operation?

Nurse No--No--He's all right.

Lady (In tone of dread)-- Den vat'e--vy he don'---( She is about to run to door leading to office. Nurse get there ahead of her. Lady stands looking at nurse)--Please, please, let me go in. Ey vanna see -----

Nurse (In pitying tone)-- He's not in there.

Lady (Eyes open wide in anguish)--No? He vent away?

Nurse Yes.

Lady (Looking at nurse as if her words were unbelievable) You--you toll him--Ey--Ey wait for him here, an'--he----

Nurse Maybe--maybe he forgot.

Lady (Swallows hard) Forgot?--Maybe.--(A deep sigh)--Maybe he forgot.  
( She turns sadly, slowly, takes a few steps toward door, staggers Nurse rushes over to her, takes her in her arms)

Nurse (About to lead her to chair)--Now, you sit down a moment. I'll get my hat and coat and take you home.

Lady (Quickly tries to straighten up)--No, no, nurse.--Ey bane all right.--Yeast--yeast a little bit--er--vat you a call it?--It--it goes round mit me--er--

Nurse (Smiling sadly)--Dissay, you meant

Lady Yes, yes--a little bit dissay.--Now Ey bane feel all right.--Ey can go.---(She looks at nurse sweetly)--You bane a good girl.--My Yohn always he vas---(She stops short)--Vell, Ey go.

Nurse (In soft, pleading tone)--Let me go with you.

Lady (Quickly)--No--no.--You work here. You got to stgy mit your job. Good-bye, nurse.-- Ey like to kiss you.---(Nurse bends towards her She kisses nurse on forehead)--Good-bye.-- Sometime ngybe yet you see my Yohn. You tell him Papa an' Mama---( She bites her lips)--ve wait.

Nurse If I see him, I'll tell him.---(She is about to turn and go)---

Lady Don' be fraid, nurse. Ey--Ey feel all right now. See, See--(She tries to smile.--(See, Ey--Ey-- (Her voice breaks, trying to suppress sobbing)--Ey feel all right.--Don' be afraid.---(She is slowly moving to door)--Ey--Ey can go.--Ey can go.---(She totters out, as

Curtain falls.

Characters:

THE WANDERER.  
MR HANSON.  
MRS HANSON.  
PASTOR.  
LINDA.  
ISAK.  
SVEN.  
HELENA.  
JULIA.  
ALFRED.  
Guests.



Act III.

Time: One year later.---Christmas Eve.

Scene: A spacious room in the home of Peter Hanson in a small western Swedish settlement. The room is elaborately furnished but lacking in refinement.---- At the left a huge Christmas tree, lavishly decorated. A door and a window in back wall. A table at right near window. A door right center. A long narrow table reaching from tree almost to door at back wall. ----Table is fairly covered with all sorts of cakes, fruits, candies and bottles of various liquors.

As curtain rises Mrs H., a woman about thirty eight, American type, is seen standing near small table laden with boxes wrapped in Christmas paper.----Her husband, Swedish type, about forty five, is piling the boxes, as she hands them to him, on top of other boxes.

Mr H. (As he looks up at boxes) Keeps growing every year, doesn't it?

Mrs H. (Smiling sweetly) As the factory keeps growing.

Mr H. Five years ago we had about----(He looks at her)

Mrs H. Five years ago I don't think we had much more than half.

Mr H. (Standing with package in hand) No, not much more.--(He puts the package on top of pile) It costs quite a good deal, a Christmas party like this, every year.

Mrs H. (Handing him another package) Yes. It does, but isn't it worth it just to see them all so--so----. You know, dear, it's like sitting at a circus watching the children. Some of them look as if their eyes were ready to pop right out of their heads.

Mr H. You're right, Laura. I really think they look forward to this party from one year to the other.

Mrs H. I'm sure they do. A party in their employer's home, and such a party! You know, they don't----(Sleigh bells are heard. She looks out through window)---It's the pastor! ----(She presses button to turn on lights on tree)

Mr H. The pastor? You didn't expect him did you?

Mrs H. No. I didn't. He usually spends his Christmas with his sister. You know. The widow.

Mr H. I wonder---

Mrs H. I suppose he needs money for some one. He knows he'll get it here, especially on Christmas.

(Bell rings. Mr H. opens door)

Mr H. (From hall) Glad to see you, pastor. Come right in.

(Both men enter)

Pastor A very merry Christmas to you both.

Mr H. Same to you, sir.

Mrs H. Let me take your hat and coat.

Pastor Just my hat, please. I won't stay long.----(Mrs H. places chair for him)---Thank you.---(As he is about to sit down he looks over at tree)---My, what an elegant tree!

Mr H. Same as every year. Just a few more lights.

Pastor (As he sits down) You've got a lot to be thankful, for, Mr Hanson

Mr H. I suppose so.

Pastor You suppose so? I'm sure you know how blessed is the giver.

Mr H. (Smiling good-naturedly) That means?---(He looks at his wife, a twinkle in his eye)---Hand me my check book, Laura.

Pastor (Smiling) No, not this time. It's not money, but it's charity I came for just the same.

Mr H Charity without money?

Pastor There is a lot that all the money in the world can't buy, Mr Hanson. For instance, a clean conscience.

(Mr and Mrs H. exchange glances)

Mr H Of course, of course.

Pastor Well, I'm sure your conscience will never trouble you; but as a messenger of God I'm about to place you in a position where your conscience will be put to a test.

Mr H But why chose this night! You know we're expecting our guests any moment.

Pastor No one will come until I leave this house. I've arranged that.

Mr H You're making me very anxious, pastor. Won't you please come to the point?

Pastor Yes, I will, right to the point.--(He looks at Mr H. a moment)-- Suppose, Mr Hanson, for some reason or other Sven Bergman were removed from your factory, would you find it very hard to replace him?

Mr H I don't think I could replace him. You know, I wouldn't have made him my foreman if--well, he's really--I could almost say indispensable to me.

Pastor (As Mrs H. is about to leave room) Please, don't go, Mrs Hanson. I think I'll need your help.

Mrs H Peter will do what's right. I'm sure he will.

Pastor I think he will too; but--(He smiles)-- I--I wish you would stay (She sits down) Now--er--just where did we leave off? Oh, yes. Yes. So Sven is really your right hand man?--(he frowns) Too bad. Too bad.

Mr H (Greatly surprised) Too bad?

Pastor Yes. Too bad, to suit my purpose right now.

Mr H This is all Greek to me. I don't understand----

Pastor You will in a moment. I wonder if you know that Sven has taken a fancy to Helga Lagerson.

Mr H Yes. I know; but I'm his employer, not his judge or his god-father. Besides, I understood she's taken the fancy to him.

Pastor Yes. That's the curious part of it. A man can sometimes be made to see the rottenness of taking another man's wife; but a woman! Sometimes she will even gloat over the fact that she can do it.

Mrs H I don't believe Helga cares a straw about Sven. It's the trinkets and the silk dresses he buys her.

Mr H You mean to say---

Pastor Yes. Helga is sporting silk dresses and expensive furs. Sven's poor little wife is shivering in a thin cotton coat.

Mr H What's the matter with Lagerson? Doesn't he see all these things? Doesn't he demand to know where they come from?

Pastor Demand? NO; but when he asks he is told her sister sends them to her from New York. He knows that isn't true, but he tries to make her believe he doesn't know. Poor fool! --Now, there is just one way to get Sven back to his senses, and that is, if you will discharge him from your employ.

Mr H Discharge him? Why, that's unreasonable! The man's my right hand in the factory; and then, well, I don't suppose he gives his wife very much, but if I discharge him, she'll get nothing.

Pastor My wife and I have arranged for that.--She'll come and live with us, until you take Sven back to work.

Mr H You're talking riddles, pastor. You ask me to discharge him, and then----

Pastor It's simple enough. Even can't be convinced Helga does'nt love him, that all she cares about is the money he spends on her; but if he loses his job, he won't have any money to spend on her, and the result will be----

Mrs H He'll be convinced.

Pastor Exactly.

Mr H Well, I--I must admit your plan may do some good, but----

Mrs H Peter, you remember telling me Nils Skanberg would be the man to replace Sven, if something ever happened?

Mr H Yes. Nils would be the man; but as yet he has'nt the experience. It will take a few years to put him in shape for that job.

Mrs H But it won't be for long, Peter. Just as soon as Helga hears he lost his job she'll be through with him.

Pastor (To Mr H.) You see now why I asked her to-----

Mr H (Smiles) You win both of you. I'll discharge him Saturday night.

Pastor (Rising) The Lord will reward you for this, Mr Hanson.

Mr H I'm only doing what I know is right.---If I were sure that Helga really loves Sven I don't think I would discharge him. I believe, when two people truly love each other, it's better for those two to be happy, than for four to be hypocrites and unhappy.

Pastor I'm surprised to hear you talk like that. I hope you will never be put to such a test; but if you were, I'm sure you'd think quite differently.---(He looks at Mrs H., smiles)---You agree with me, don't you, Mrs Hanson?

Mrs H Yes. Yes, of course

Pastor I---I'll be going now. I know the folks are all waiting patiently to come in.

(Mrs H. hands him his hat. He goes to window, looks out.)

Pastor There's Linda and her husband out there waiting for me. I asked her to pass them all from coming in until she sees me coming out (He goes to Mrs H) I want to thank you, Mrs Hanson. You've been a great help to me.

Mrs H (Smiling graciously) Peter really does'nt need my help or my influence to do the right thing.

Pastor No. No, of course not---er (He smiles) but any little favor I may need of him in the future---your presence while I'm asking it won't---er---I don't think it will do any harm.---(They shake hands)---A very, very enjoyable evening to you both.

(He shakes hands heartily with Mr H., turns to door; suddenly reminded of something, he turns toward them again)

Pastor I almost forgot! You see, I might have to come to you about this some other day and not break into your Christmas party this way, but my wife pointed out to me how humiliating it will be for Sven's wife if Helga will be hanging around him. I wonder, if you could'nt-----

Mr H You may leave that to my wife. She'll take care of that.

Pastor (In tone of happy relief) Fine! Now I'm sure everything will be all right.---(Mr H. opens door)---Again I wish you all the joys of a perfect Christmas.

Mr H Thank you, pastor. The same to you.

(As pastor is about to leave, Linda is seen in door-way)

Pastor I'm sorry, Linda, I kept you waiting so long.

Linda Oh, dat's all right, pastor. Ev'rybody knows ven you got somet'ing to talk about mit Mr Hanson it somet'ing vat's gonna be good for somebody. Should we all come in now?

Pastor Yes, Linda. Your big Christmas party is ready and waiting for you.

Linda (Calls loudly) Come, Isak, we can go in now.

Pastor Hope you'll all have a nice time.

Linda Tanks, pastor. We always have a fine time heren Christmas.

Pastor Yes, I know.

Linda Isak is by de door. Will you please be so good, pastor, tell him he should come up.

Pastor (As he leaves) I'll tell him,----- (Mr H. closes door)---

Linda My goodness! De tree is even more beautiful den last year.

Mrs H Same as last year. Just a few more lights on it.

Linda It looks so big, an' such a lot o' tings on it, an' such a lot o' lights! --- (In ecstasy)---It's beautiful!

(Bell rings. Mrs H. is taking Linda's hat and coat.--Mr H. opens the door)

Mr H Come right in, Isak.

(Linda and Isak are of the Swedish working class type. He about thirty eight, she about thirty five)

Isak (As he enters) Merry Christmas!

Mr H It's always merry here Christmas, is'nt it?

Isak I betcha.

(Mr H. takes Isak's hat and coat, places all on a bench near door)

Mr H You've spent with us--letme see--how many Christmas's?

Isak Oh, a lot.-- (He turns to Linda)--How many, Linda?

Linda Vell, Yoolie vas yeest a little baby ven you begin to work for Mr Hanson. You remember, don't you?

Isak Sure. Sure. Dat's right, en now Yoolie she's ten year old. XXXX So I bane vorkin' fer you 'bout nine year now. Ey remember Ey vas so lucky. It vas yeest two weeks before Christmas ven Ey begin

te vork, en de foreman he said ye could come to de party too.

Linda she vas so happy. De whole night before Christmas she don' sleep.

Mr H (Laughs) Why didn't you bring Julia with you?

Linda (Awkwardly) Vell, vell it's a secret, but I tell you anyhow.

Isak Linda, you shouldn't.

Linda (Anxious to tell) It's netting, yeest a little foolishness. Dey're gonna make for Mr Hanson a little surprise. All de boys an' girls dey're gonna wear mask suits, like dey do it home in Sweden. You know, we do dat home on Christmas night.

Mrs H Yes, I know. Mr Hanson told me every one delivers his presents dressed in costume. It must be a pretty sight.

Isak Oh, so pretty! Vait, you'll see. You know they all ask me if you vill like it, an' Ey say--no-- Ey don' say, <sup>Linda</sup> ~~no~~, she say suse you'll like it.

Mr H She was right.-- (To Mrs H.)--Now, Laura, you'll see a real Swedish Christmas.

Linda (To Isak) You see, Isak. I vas right.

Isak Sure. Ven you're right, you're right, enven you're wrong, you're right too. You know, like always.--- (They laugh)

(Sleigh bells are heard. Mrs H. is about to go to window)

Linda He! He! Dey should'nt see you.--Ey moost look out de window, den dey know de pastor he don' bane here no more. Dat's how we make it up mit dem.--- (She runs to window, looks out)-- Dey're takin' off dey's coats?

Isak Dey must be crazy! Yoolie'll catch a cold.

Linda Vell, Isak it don' be no surprise ven dey come in an' you don' see right away de mask suits.



Isak It's a hell of a surprise anyhow. You told him.

Linda Hey're comin' op now.--Quick, Mrs Hanson, begin to look like you don' know nothin'.

Mr H (Laughs) All right, Linda, I'm beginning.

(Bell rings. -- Mrs H. goes to door.--Ten couples enter, shouting: Merry Christmas!-- They are all dressed in Swedish peasant costumes. Each one carries a box, which they hand to Mrs H., until she has so many Mr H. comes to her assistance)

Julia (Handing a small box to Mr H.) Ain't this a fine surprise, Mr Hanson?--(She looks down at her costume)

Mr H (Smiling kindly) Could'nt be finer. Hereafter we'll have every Christmas just like this one. It was a great idea.

Mrs H (Going to door, calls) Marie!

Mr H (Laughing) Guess we'll need a couple of Maries for this.

Linda Yeellie'll help.

(Enter maid. Mrs H. piles the boxes on her arms)

Mr H (As maid is about to leave) Come back for these, Marie.

Maid Yes, sir.---(To Mrs H.)-- Where'll I put them?

Mrs H Put them all in my room.--- (Maid leaves)

Julia (To her mother) Are those boxes over there on the table the present for us?

Linda Yes, Ven ve go home ve each get a box.

Julia No too, Mama?

Linda Ey tink so.

(Sleigh bells are heard again. Julia runs to window)

Julia It's Sven Bergman, Mama.

Linda An' Greta, she ain't mit him?

Julia No. He's all alone.

10

(Mrs H. and maid enter. Mr H. goes over to maid and hands her his boxes)

Mrs H (As maid is about to leave) Marie, come back and take all the hats and coats from the porch and put them over there on that bench.---(She points to bench, where Linda's and Isak's coats were placed)

Maid Yes, Mrs Hanson.----- (Maid leaves)

(Bell rings. Mr H. opens door. Sven stands in door-way)

Sven Merry Christmas, Mr Hanson.--- (He enters. Mr H. closes door)

Mr H Same to youn Sven.--- Where's Greta?

Sven Greta, she bane have a head ache to-night.

Mr H That's too bad. Did you give her a dose of Bromo?

Sven She took a head ache powder yooast before Ey vent away. She say ven she feel a liddle bedder she'll come a liddle later.

(While speaking, Sven is looking around to see if Helga is there)

Mr H I'll ring her up in a little while. If she feels better, you'l go and get her, eh?

(Sven did not hear Mr H's last remark. He is anxiously looking around the room for Helga.)

Mr H Did'nt you hear what I said, Sven?

Sven (Startled) Oh, yes, --yes, I mean, no. Ey--Ey vas lookin'--er --so many presents---(He looks in direction of table with all the presents on it)---Looks like Goldfarb's department store.

Mr H (In decided tone) I said I'm going to ring up your home in an hour, and if Greta is feeling a little better, you'll go home and bring her over.

Sven Sure. Sure, Mr Hanson.

(The guests are talking to each other,---Ewen turns again in search on Helga.--She is watching him with mischief in her eyes to see if he is looking for her,---- Mrs H. is watching Helga, and goes over to her, just as Ewen spies her and is about to go over,----The guests are bustling about, some admire the tree, some look at table)

Mrs H Your costume is beautiful, Helga. Where did you get it?

(Maid enters. Goes to door leading to porch, and exits)

Helga (About to speak, looks at Ewen) I--I--my sister sent it from New York.

(Door opens. Maid enters, burdened with hats and coats.

Mrs H Ewen, will you please help Marie. There are more coats out on the porch.

(Marie places things on bench)

Ewen Sure. Sure Ey'll help.----(He goes out)

Julie When do we eat, Mama?

Linda First ve sing der Christmas carol Yoolie.

Julia Do we have to sing it, Mama?

(Ewen enters, arms full of coats, places them on bench)

Mr H We're going to sing right now, Julia.

(Mr H. puts the record on the victrola,---Mrs H. is about to leave Helga, sees Ewen coming toward her, turns again to Helga, speaks softly to her.)

Mr H (Raises hand) Ready now, all of you.

(Everybody stands at attention. Mr H. starts victrola. All begin to sing. Mrs H. standing between Ewen and Helga,---

The song: A Swedish Christmas carol)

Julia (As song ends) Now, do we eat, Mama?

Mrs H Go right over to the table and help yourself, dear.

Julia Should I, Mama?

Linda (Smiling, looks at Mrs H.) Well, if Mrs Hanson says so---

Mrs H Go right ahead, Julia.

(Julia makes a rush for the table)

Mr H You know, we usually have a couple of dances before the refreshments, but we started a little late. Some of you might be hungry, so----

Isak (In good natured, laughable tone) Ey don' eat no supper home.

(Several guests exclaim: Neither did I!)

Julia is gorging herself with sweets)

Mrs H I think we're all hungry, so--(She goes over to table)--Come on, folks.

(All go to table. Ewen stands talking to Helga)

Isak Xceast a minute! Ve don' hear yet de toast for Mr and Mrs Hanson. Come on! Ey help. Ve fill op de glasses.

(Mr H, and Isak fill glasses, and pass them to the guests)

Isak (Looking toward Ewen and Helga) Hey, you, Ewen, an' Helga! You in dis appty too! Comeover here for de toast.

(They walk over side by side. Mr H. hands Ewen a glass. Mrs H. hands one to Helga)

Isak All got glasses now?

(Guests, looking at each other, shout: Yes! Yes! All!)

Isak So who's gonna make dis time de toast?

(Several of the guests shout: You will. It's your turn.)

Isak (Looking perplexed) Ey? Ey? Ey can't. Ey don' know vat to say.

Linda Say it mit der heart, Isak. So vat you vill say it vill be good.

(Guests shout: Right, Isak. Right)

Isak (Looks around, trying hard to think of something to say, and begins awkwardly) Vell, vell--er-- (He giggles)-- Ey vish somebody would do dis for me.--( A moment's silence)---Oh, vat a bunch o' cowards!--He threes back his head in sheer desperation)-- Here's to de health of Mr and Mrs Hanson. Ve hope dey should be happy together always till dey be old, very, very old.

(Guests shout: Hip, hip, hurrah!--They drink, place glasses on table.----Sven takes Helga's glass, puts it on table, then they walk to corner of room, while other guests are partaking of food)

Linda (Whispers to Julia) Yoellie, you got to stop eating, you gonna be sick.

Julia (Mouth so full she can scarcely speak) You told me I could eat all I want, 'cause you're gonna give me magnesia when we get home, did'nt you?

Mrs H (Passing tray with food to guests) Don't be bashful, folks; there's lots more of everything.

Mr H (Looking over toward Sven and Helga) Hey, there, Sven, don't you two want to eat something?

Helga I'm not hungry, not just yet.

Mr H Don't speak for him. I know he's always hungry. Come on over here to the table, Sven.

(Sven goes to table reluctantly. Helga follows him.)

Mr H (To Helga) I thought you said you were'nt hungry?

(Helga smiles mischievously)

Isak (To Linda) Look over there. See her husband how he stands like a fool.

Linda You mean Helga's husband?

Isak Sure. He's lookin' around from von to the other. He's ashamed ev'rybody should see she's mit Sven all de time.--By jimminy, Ey gonna tell Sven Borgman someting, vat he would'nt like it.

Linda Don't do dat, Isak. Alfred is vatching ev'rybody. Maybe he'll hear you.

Isak Nobody would'nt hear me, only Sven an' Helga, an' dey're gonna hear plenty.

(Sven and Helga, sandwich in hand, walk back to corner of room. Isak is watching them.----Guests are eating and talking, some standing by the table, some sitting around.---Mr H. is pouring wine. Mrs H. hands it to guests)

Man You had enough wine, Martha. You remember, last year I had to carry you out to the sled.

Martha (In jolly mood) You don't mind doing the same thing this year, do you)----- (She drinks. They laugh.)

Mr H (Calls)--Alfred, come over here! You like a good glass of wine, don't you?

Alf. (With a sad smile) Sure,---(He walks over to table)

(Isak, seeing Alfred out of the way, walks over to Sven and Helga)

Isak (Whispers) Say, vat's de wedder mit you two? Dis is a Christmas party, not a mush party for husbands mit odder husband's wives.

Helga Who are you totell me what to do?

Isak Ey don'tell you vat to do, Ey tell you vat not to do.

Helga You just run along back to your eats, and don't bother about us.

Linda (To Julie, who is still eating) Now you don't eat no more. You be sick.

Mrs H (To Julia, who is sulking) Don't worry, Julia, I'm going to pack up a nice big box with everything you like.

Julia For me to take home?

Mrs H Yes.

Julia (Happily) Oh, thank you, Mrs Hanson. Mama said you would do that, so I brought a box with me. It's out on the porch. I'll go and get it.----(She runs out)

Guest (Whispers) Party kind o' druggy this year. Ain't it?

Julia (Running in with box) Here, Mrs Hanson, here's my box.

Mrs H Take it in to the kitchen. Tell the cook---no, never mind---just take it in. I'll fill it myself.----(Exit Julia)

Guest Hey, Sven, come on. Let's start the dance. It's getting late.

Sven Vell, a lot o' folks did'nt come yet.

Guest If they're not here by now, they can't be in the dance, that's all

Mr H Right you are, Fred. Get it startedn Sven.---(He looks for record/ Here it is.---(While Sven gets couples to-gether, Mr H. looks over at Alfred)--What are you stading in the corner for, Alfred? Why don't you take Helga in to the dance?

Alf. (Hesitatingly) Vell, vell--Ey--you know--Ey don' dance so good.

Mr H Helga will get you around all right. Come on in. Come on Helga.

Helga Alfred very seldom dances, Mr Hanson.

Mr H Christmas only comes once a year, that's seldom enough Come on, Alfred.

(Alfred comes over, takes Helga's hand. They walk to center of stage.)

Julia (Rushes in, to mother:) We're gonna have ice cream. I saw a big barrel of it out in the kitchen.

Isak Mush, Xecle.

(Sven has arranged couples for the dance.---Mrs H. seeing there is no partner for Sven, goes over to him)

Mrs H (To Sven) I'll be your partner, Sven if you don't mind.

Sven (Surprised) Yes, Yes, Mrs Hanson. I--I mean--sure I don' mind. I'll be glad. --(She takes Sven's arm. They take their place in the dance)

Mr H (Adjusting the record) All ready now?

Guests All ready!

(Music.---Dance.---Julia, at table, is filling her pockets with sweets.--- Dance is becoming livelier with each moment until almost the last round, when bell rings.

Linda Hey come now!

Isak (Out of breath) Dey missed a fine dance, all right.

Julia I'll open the door.

(Julia goes out.---Dance continues, merrily.---Julia enters, followed by pastor. He is pale and nervous.---Dance ceases)

Mr H (Looks at pastor a moment) Something happened, pastor? What--What is it?

Pastor I'm--I'm sorry, Mr Hanson, to break into your party like this, but---but--( He takes a deep breath)- -It can't be helped.

Mrs H (Nervously) What's--what's happened, pastor?

Pastor (Looks around room) Where's Sven Borgman?

(Sven comes forward, looks at pastor, becomes alarmed)

Sven Anything---?

Pastor (Looks at him a moment with reproach) Sven, your wife is dead. (Sven staggers.---A murmur of shock and grief is heard from guests)

Sven (To shocked to speak coherently) Ey--Ey--it can't be! She--she don' bane sick--yeast--yeast a little head-ache.

Pastor (Staring at Sven with unrelenting reproach in his eyes) She did'nt have a head-ache. It was the heart-aches that she points at

Helga)-- and you gave her. That's what killed her!

(Helga lowers her eyes.--Guests look at her with scorn, then turn from her.)

Mr H Heart attack, pastor?

Pastor (Still looking at Sven) My wife found her lying on the kitchen floor with the end of the gas tube in her mouth.

Mr H (Horried) Good God!

Pastor She was some dead.--Poor, little Greta!

(Helga slowly walks to bench, takes her hat and coat, walks to door.----Pastor sees her.)

Pastor Helga, I have got something to say to you before you go.  
(She does not look up, but turns knob of door about to leave.  
Pastor goes over to her, stands with his back to door)--You'll listen to what I have got to say before you pass this threshold. It may be a lesson to somebody else, who would be tempted to do the contemptible thing that you have done. You're a callous thief. You stole another woman's husband. It was your things, yours and his--(He points to Sven)--that sent that poor little woman to such an early grave.---(In bitter tone)--May the curse of God be on every woman's soul who would steal another woman's husband!

Alfred (Cries out)-- Don't, pastor! Please, don't!

Pastor (Continuing)--And the same curse be on the man who steals another man's wife!

(Helga sinks to her knees near door and sobs.--Alfred goes to Helga, raises her, wraps coat around her, while they are all watching him.---He opens door, and walks out with his arms around his wife.)

Isak He is a fool. I would'nt do dat.

(Sven takes his hat and coat from bench, goes to door.)

Mr H Where are you going, Sven?

Sven (Looks up at Mr H. sadly, stops to think a moment) Ey--Ey--don' know.----(He opens door, walks out slowly)

Isakb I tink ve all should go, Mr Hanson.--Mrs Hanson looks so--so---  
(Mr H. looks at his wife, sees her pale and trembling)

Linda Ey tink Isak is right. Ve should all go home.  
(Guests take their hats and coats from bench)

Pastor (To Mr H.) I'm--I'm very sorry, Mr Hanson. Perhaps I should have waited till---

Mr H It's all right, pastor. I understand.

(Guests go over to Mr and Mrs Hanson. They shake hands.--

Mrs H (When Julia comes over) I'll send you your box of goodies in the morning, Julia.

Julia And the Christmas present?

Mrs H And the Christmas present too.---(To her guests)--I'll send them to all of you.

(They walk out slowly, some calling: good night, pastor.--Mr H closes door after them)

Mrs H (To pastor) I'll tell Marie to bring in some hot tea. You look cold.

Pastor No, No, I'm going right back. My wife, well, you van about imagine how she feels.

Mrs H Yes. It must have been awful to find---It's too horrible for words.

Pastor (Sadly) It is. Their sin, Sven and Helga's, is unpardonable.  
(He shakes head sadly)--Unpardonable.---(He sighs)--I must be



going. I hope you two will get a little sleep, though I doubt it. I don't think any one of us will.---(He goes to door)--  
Good night.

Mr & Mrs H Good night.

(Pastor goes out, closing door gently behind him)

Mr H Go to bed, Laura. Your nerves need rest.

Mrs H Am 'nt you going to bed, dear?

Mr H No, I--I--You go to bed, dear. I'll be up soon.

( She kisses husband, walks out.--Mr H. turns off all lights but the ones on the tree and candle lights on table.---He sits down at table, pours a glass of brandy, drinks, then lights a cigar. Begins to puff at it. Falls to thinking a few moments.---

A slight at door is heard. Mr H. does not hear it.---Another tap Mr H. does not hear it.---Door opens softly. Wanderer is seen in doorway, pack in one hand, cane in the other. He comes in quietly, looks around.---Mr H. does not see him. Wanderer walks toward him slowly, looks at him a moment, then looks about him in a perplexed manner, not knowing what to do.---Mr H. looks up suddenly, startled. )

Mr H (Rises) Good God, man, where did you come from?

Wan (Smiling) Right through that door-way, sir.

Mr H How'd you get in?

Wan Your pastor left it open. I was sitting on your door step, when he came out. I suppose I looked tired, so he insisted I would go in. He assured me you are a kind hearted man.--You wouldn't mind?

Mr H Of course not. Of course I don't mind.---(He takes Wanderer's pack, places it in corner of room, then places arm chair at

table)---Sit down. Make yourself at home.---(Wan. walks over to table with difficulty)---It's easy to see you are very tired.

Wan (Sitting down, draws a sigh of relief) Yes. I am.

(Fills glass with brandy, hands it to Wan.)

Wan Thanks.---(He drinks)

Mr H I'll go and have a room prepared for you.---(He is about to go)

Wan No. No, I--I--could'nt lie down. I--I can breath much better, sitting up like this.

Mr H But you can't sleep that way all night.

Wan Oh, yes. I've been sleeping sitting up for---well, it's over a year now.

Mr H Asthma?

Wan No. Doctors say it's my heart. In the beginning I didn't believe it, but now, well, I guess it doesn't make much difference any more.---(He looks over at tree)---A beautiful tree!

Mr H (Looks at Wan., trying to read his thoughts)--Where there's life there's hope.

Wan I've lived on that for the last sixteen years.

Mr H Why not try for another sixteen?

Wan (Smiles sarcastically) For what?

Mr H Well, I don't know.---Have--er--is there nothing to try for?

Wan (A deep sigh)--There was--(Shakes head sadly)--but not any more.

Mr H I'm beginning to understand. Your wife is dead.

Wan No, at least I think not---I hope not.---(Wan., seeing a perplexed expression on Mr H's face, looks at him a moment)---

I'm not in the least demented. Don't let that worry you, sir.---My wife left me. That's what made me the thing you see here now. I've been wandering, searching, hoping for sixteen years long

† Heshakes his head sadly)---It's over now. My strength is gone--  
I'm through!

Mr H (Looking at him with sympathy)--Not yet, my good man. Where there  
is just a spark of life, there is still hope.--It is still possib  
you'll find your wife. Providence might send her to you.

Wan (Looks at Mr H. a moment in silence)---To-morrow morning I'll be  
on my way to your "poor farm".--(He tries to smile)--It is'nt  
likely I'll ever meet her ~~there~~ there.

Mr H Have you already made an application?

Wan Yes. I was told every bed is occupied; but one very old man is  
dying---(Smiles hard once more)---I'm in hopes he is dead by now.

Mr H Then in the meantime you----

Wan Oh, it's nothing new for me to wander about. I'm used to it, and,  
well, one can hardly blame them for being over crowded.

Mr H No, but, we're not over crowded here. Just my wife and I and the  
help.--You're welcome to----

Wan You mean-----

Mr H Yes. Why not? I think we three could get along nicely.

Wan Your pastor told me, you're one of the kind men. He is right; but  
I wouldn't take advantage of that. I'm---(He closes his eyes as if  
in pain, lowers head a moment, then takes small pill box from  
pocket, opens it.---Mr H. goes to table, pours water in a glass,  
hands it to him.---He puts tablet on tongue, takes a sip of the  
water, looks up at Mr H., speaking with difficulty)----You see,  
I wouldn't--er--make very pleasant company, would I?

Mr H I think you ought to have a doctor.---(He is about to go to  
phone)

Wan No, no, please don't. I'll be all right in just a moment.

(Mr H. takes cushion from bench, places it behind Wan's head. He  
touches his hand)

Mr H You're cold.---( He goes out, returns in a moment with a blanket,  
wraps it around Wan's knees)

Wan (Breathing a little more easily now) Thanks.

Mr H You seem a trifle better.

Wan Yes. --(A deep sigh)---I can breathe again.---(Looks up at Mr H)  
What a grand world this would be to live in, if all men were like  
you!

Mr H (A shortchuckle) You're just seeing the best side of menow.  
Wait, when you're here with us a little while, I promise you,  
you'll change your mind.

Wan I'm leaving here in the morning. You see, I don't want to change  
my mind.

Mr H I'm going to change your mind about leaving this house in the  
morning; but we won't argue about that now.--You want to get some  
sleep, don't you?

Wan It's very rarely I fall asleep before dawn.

Mr H Then, perhaps you wouldn't mind my sitting here a little while.  
I was just about to smoke a cigar, when you came in.

Wan Go right ahead and smoke. Don't mind me.

(Mr H. goes to table, opens a box of cigars, offers one to Wan.)

Wan No, thanks.

(Mr H. places box back on table, lights his cigar, sits down.)

Mr H Fine setting for a nice, confidential chat.

Wan I see. The lights are low, the stage is all set. I understand.

Mr H I want to help you.

Wan (Shakes head sadly) You can't! No one can; but I'll tell you my

story just the same. It may relieve me a little--here---(He puts his hand over his heart)---(A short pause. He takes a deep breath) Well, once upon a time---that's the way to begin a story, is'nt it?

Mr H (Smiling kindly) If it happened a long time ago.

Wan Sixteen years is a long time.--It's that long since she left me; but, so that you will fully understand, I must begin from the time we were first married.---For five years we lived like two love-birds. In the beginning I had little more to give her than my love; but that was all she asked, it was all she wanted.---After a while our little nest became well feathered. Things began to come my way True! I worked hard for it! Many were the times I could'nt stand up straight after my day's work was done; but when I started for home--to her---I forgot I was tired. I would strut along as if I was walking on air, that would lead me straight to Paradise.---It was that! It was all I could ever imagine Paradise to be.---What would you expect to find in Paradise?

Mr H Well, I don't know; but I would imagine it must be very peaceful and beautiful there.

Wan That's just what our home was.---Peace was in our hearts, beauty was in our souls.---Our happiness was so great for these five years ---there are no words can fully describe it.---Now I've painted a pretty good picture of my married life up to this point, have'nt I?

Mr H Yes. Go on.

Wan (Repents)--Go on!--That means, go from Heaven to Hell.---Hell is a mild word for it.---It happened on a Saturday night. We were making plans for our Sunday picnic, when the bell rang. I opened the door, and in came the devil all set to do his damndest. He came in the shape of a telegram to my wife. It read: "Come home at

once. Mother very ill".---We began to pack, that is, I was doing the packing, while she was pleading with me to go with her, but that was impossible. I could'nt afford to lose my job. I knew, there was another fellow waiting for the chance to show the boss he could do just as well as I did, perhaps better.---Well, I took her to the station. In our excitement we forgot all about daylight saving time, so we had another hour together that we didn't expect. As we sat there waiting, she kept holding my hand tighter and tighter. I kept looking at the clock. I never saw the minute hand move so fast.---When I saw the hour had passed, an icy feeling settled around my heart; but for her sake I kept a smile on my face, until the train, with it's devilish speed, went thundering out, taking all that meant the breath of life to me.---(A sob in his voice.---A short pause.)---I---never---saw her again.---(A pause)---A little water, please.

Mr H I'll get some fresh water.---(He rushes out, returns in a moment, hands Wan. the glass.--Wan. drinks, hands glass back to Mr H., who puts it on table)

Wan I'll go on now with my story.

Mr H Suppose you postpone the rest till to-morrow?

(Wan. is paying no attention. His thoughts are far away.--A few moments silence, then)

Wan (Cries out)--God! Why could'nt I have found the man that so wrecked my life?

Mr H Perhaps it is better so. You might have committed murder, and then

Wan (Shakes his head)-- His dead body? What revenge would that be to me, to know he is beyond all care, all strife, all earthly damnation?

Wan He! What I wanted was to find him, to take my wife from him, then hand him my pack and cane---( In tone of anguish)--and send him out in the world to wander, to suffer, and never find a real friend, until it is too late.--That's what I prayed God for---but it never came----(A sob)--It never came.

Mr H I'm sorry, my friend. This was my fault. I should have known better. Now--(He pats him gently on the shoulder)--pull yourself together. You and I are going to have a nice, hot toddy.

Wan Don't you want to hear the rest of the story?

Mr H Of course I do, but not to-night. Some other night, when you're rested and stronger.---(He makes a move toward door)--It won't take me long, just a few minutes.---(He leaves)

(Wan. closes his eyes for a moment, a deep sigh, puts hand in pocket, takes out a small picture in a collapsible frame. He opens it, looks at it with tender longing.---He keeps on looking at it, till his eyes grow tired. He then closes frame, holding it in his hand. His head begins to droop, but he tries to force himself to keep awake.---He looks at tree a moment. His eyes gradually close. His head falls to one side.--- Sleep has overtaken him.--- Though in his sleep he is restless for a few moments. He moves his knees causing blanket to fall to the floor, then his fingers, holding picture, relax and picture falls to the floor.---)

A few moments silence.-----

Mr H. enters carrying tray with two glasses of toddy. Seeing Wan. asleep, he tip-toes to table, places tray on it, then walks back to Wanderer, picks up blanket and places it gently over Wanderer's knees.---As he is about to turn, he sees picture on floor. He

opens it, looks at it, startles, whispers: My God!--He stands looking at Wan., as Curtain falls.--- For a few moments, indicate the passing of two hours.

As Curtain rises, Wan. is seen seated just as when Curtain fell.---His shirt is open at the neck, his neck tie is lying on the blanket, which is on the floor.---A few moments silence.---Mr H. enters. He is motioning to Mrs H., who is standing a few steps from door. She enters, though very reluctantly.---He takes her hand, leads her gently to Wan.--- She dreads to look up at Wan.'s face, stands still a moment, then slowly raises her head. As she looks at Wan. she is about to cry out, but Mr H. quickly puts his hand over her mouth. They both walk over to other end of room.---No word is spoken, but she looks pleadingly at her husband. Her lips are quivering, her hands tremble.---Mr H. opens his arms to her, kisses her tenderly again and again.---While she is softly sobbing, he removes her arms from around his neck, puts her gently from him, goes to corner of room, takes up Wanderer's hat, puts on the ragged coat, is about to take up the pack, when she throws her arms around him again. She sobs.)

Mr H (Whispers)--Sh---Sh.---

( He removes her arms again, picks up pack and cane and walks slowly out into the night.

Mrs H., still sobbing, runs to window. Her sobbing becomes louder and louder.-- She turns from window, walks over to Wan.---She stands looking at him a moment, sees his arm is hanging limply over side of chair.---As she touches hand,



and is about to raise it, she is shocked to find it cold and clammy. It falls, showing no sign of life. She quickly touches his head, and finding it cold, she becomes terror stricken.---She realises he is dead.---She stands looking at him a few moments, trembling and bewildered, then looks around room, as if something in it could tell her what to do.---- Suddenly she rushes over to window, opens it quickly and cries out: Peter! Peter come back.--Come back! Come back! She turns, runs out, returns in a moment wearing a coat. She is putting on her hat, as she rushes out.

Curtain.